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COSIMA WAGNER

RICHARD COUNT DU MOULIN-ECKART

COSIMA WAGNER

VOL. II

Translated from the German
by
CATHERINE ALISON PHILLIPS

And with an Introduction
by
ERNEST NEWMAN

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COSIMA WAGNER

CHAPTER VI

NEW AIMS

IT WAS on the occasion of this birthday that Nietzsche, who had come over from Basel for an hour or two only on Christmas Eve, confided to the Master's care his present for Frau Cosima, the sketch for his future work on the renaissance of drama, which then bore the title *Die Entstehung des tragischen Gedankens* (*The Origin of the Tragic Idea*). Frau Cosima was highly delighted and touched, and gave it as her opinion that this was a work of the greatest value. " The profundity and grandeur of the views," she writes, " here presented in the most concentrated form, are quite remarkable. We follow the course of his ideas with the greatest and most lively interest. I am especially delighted that Richard's ideas can find a further extension in this field." This was a hope which at that time seemed fully justified; so Frau Cosima clung to it, attempting, indeed, to get it carried out by making suggestions to Nietzsche about the way in which these ideas might be realized. Disguising to some extent the emotion which the young scholar had aroused in her, she expressed the view that anyone could have wise and great thoughts, but that everything depended upon their being stated in a form at once comprehensive and capable of development; and Nietzsche acted upon this advice in a spirit of loyal devotion. He was thoroughly convinced of the truth and justice of her views, and this is why his book *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (*The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*) treats the subject in a more exhaustive manner than usual. It was characteristic of her wonderful nature to give true and genuinely womanly advice, quite regardless of her own mental or emotional reactions.

Nietzsche remained at Triebschen over the holidays, and this was perhaps the most beautiful time which they had spent together. On the 28th the Master felt irresistibly impelled to read them both the third act of *Tristan*, for which purpose they moved about from room to room. It was cold downstairs and the "thinking-room (*Denkstube*)" had been given up to Nietzsche; so they went upstairs, where Fidi was asleep, and Wagner decided to read the third act in a low voice so as not to wake the child. "An awful impression of grandeur descended upon me," is the entry in her diary. But Richard, too, viewed the present in the light of this act of *Tristan*, and she relates how, while driving with her to Lucerne on some business," he gazed long at me and said that I had too much breeding (*Rasse*), yet that my face revealed a congenital affinity with him (*urverwandt sei*). Then, reverting to the past, he continued: 'It is only in the words of Tristan, in the second act, that I can describe my position towards you, for poetry always anticipates events, and reality can subsequently confirm the truth of the poet's vision.' How long did I suffer about Hans, until I saw that there, as in *Tristan*, a power was at work against which everything else was powerless." And she continues: "This reading of *Tristan* saddened me, as I recalled Richard's position in Zürich, and I cannot think without tears of such deceptive visions, disappointments, and fleeting products of illusion. . . . Richard reproved me for this mood and said that I attached more importance to things than they deserved." It is interesting that often, as on this occasion, the figure of her first husband affected her feelings simultaneously with that of the women who, as her slight tinge of jealousy suggested, had fascinated her lover in Zürich. But these were only passing impressions, and the new year opened for her with the Master's greeting: "Angel of my existence."

Apart from this the new year brought with it a variety of cares and misgivings. The eyes of both of them were still turned apprehensively towards the west and the development of events both before and inside Paris. Then came a letter from Peter

Cornelius with lively complaints of what he had to endure in connexion with the school.[1] The Master was not very pleased about this and said: "Everyone will admit what he is and what he is not — that he has learnt nothing and knows no Greek; but that he is not a genius — never!" It was an echo and a reminder of the outside world to which the plan was that they were to return. "It will be a strange feeling for us," he said, "when we come into contact with the outside world again. All we need pray to God for is good health, for all happiness is indeed ours!" "Whoever is not an artist or a saint is but an ephemeral being (*Eintagsfliege*), a pitiful creature. Life has never anything different to offer — a boring, monotonous business, it is only the diversity of forms that can hold one's attention." Frau Cosima granted this with all her heart. "It is enough to drive one mad," she said. "Yes," he replied, "that is what I call the Dionysian element in Goethe. *Faust* is one of the most wonderful achievements of mankind. Conceived in the flower of his youth, completed in extreme old age — what a product of vitality!" This reaction was due to the letters such as those of Peter Cornelius, the effect of which was to make the Master say that he would be glad to hear no more from the outer world. "What have I gained from the performances?" he said. "Nothing but unrest and anxiety; and my sole satisfaction is when no *contretemps* arises. But what I do leaves me no impressions and no pleasure, except up to the time of the first draft, when the nebulous pencilled idea suddenly stands clear and plain before me. The instrumentation already belongs to the world. One has become stale (*mürbe*). Am I to rejoice because the things which I wrote twenty years ago are esteemed now, when I have progressed so much further — so that I must always be taking one step forwards and two backwards?"

We see that he was now at the parting of the ways between the quiet, yet creative days at Triebschen and the new paths into which he was undoubtedly driven, not by his ambition, but by his destiny. For while thinking about the completion of *The Ring*, he could not but think at the same time of a unique presentation which should be worthy of it.

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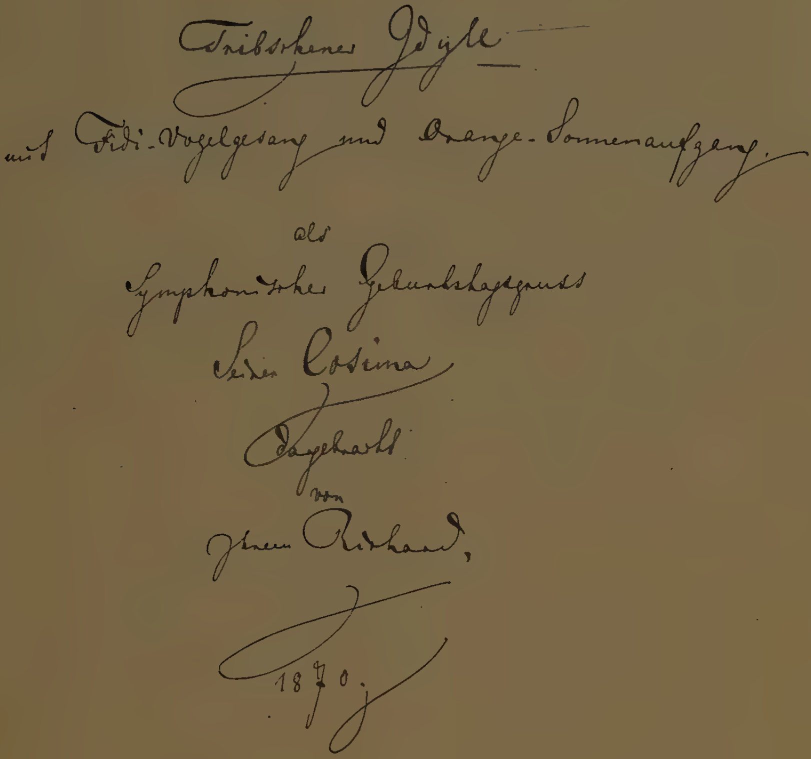
[1] The school of music in Munich at which he was a professor. — Tr.

And he did, in fact, set all his affairs in order with a view to renewed contact with the world. He was quite clear in his mind, too, with regard to his relations with Hans von Bülow, even though this gave pain to his wife and did violence to her feelings. This was plainly shown on Bülow's birthday, January 8, when he proposed his health at dinner and exclaimed to the children: " Long live your dear father, children, your mamma's best and truest friend." And when they were alone again, he wanted to talk of Hans. " I begged him to keep silence," she writes, " for my heart was aching. This hurt him, and so I was guilty of a great wrong." For this feeling was characteristic of him and arose from the infinite simplicity of his heart. Years afterwards at Bayreuth he once asked how it was that Hans never let them see anything of him, and was quite taken aback when, concealing her own emotion, Frau Cosima replied quietly that it really would not do. Hans shared the Master's feelings on the subject, and once when the Master had long been dead, while talking to the most faithful friend of the Wagner family after a concert in Berlin, he broke out vehemently: " It is you who are to blame for my not coming to Bayreuth! " For after the Master's death he considered it his own mission to carry on his work. He, too, was full of a wondrous naïveté, with which Wagner's work had infected him, and this produced an effect on him like that of Siegfried's draught of oblivion. But both then and later Frau Cosima had but one idea, that he should find his life's happiness in the love of his children alone. For, as we see from the letters of her devoted friend Marie Mouchanoff, a new life seemed to have begun for him in Florence. As early as September 1870 she had written to her daughter: " He has made a brilliant position for himself in Florence; there is talk of his being in love with Madame Minghetti or her daughter. You will see these two enchanting persons this winter, and I envy you the pleasure. They both have an irresistible attraction."

Meanwhile the destiny of Germany was working itself out, and they both followed the progress of events with equal interest and delight. It was under the influence of these that he



Tribschener Idyll
mit Fidi-Vogelgesang und Orange-Sonnenaufgang
als
Symphonischer Geburtstagsgruss
Seiner Cosima
dargebracht
von
ihrem Richard,
1870.

DEDICATION
Page of the Siegfried Idyll

wrote his *Kaisermarsch*, which he had originally been commissioned to write as a coronation march, but which had taken hold of him more and more as he wrote it. It was certainly a disappointment to him afterwards when he heard what was going on in connexion with the so-called musical celebration of the peace in Berlin, for Joachim and others were at the head of it, and not only were they naturally in opposition to him, but they arranged a festival in which there was no place for him or his works.

Amid all this Wagner's admiration for Bismarck increased steadily, a feeling which led him to write his verses to the German Army;[1] he had at first disdained to publish them, upon which Frau Cosima sent them to Lothar Bucher at Headquarters, with a request that he would hand them to Bismarck, the only man, so Wagner imagined, who would understand him: "The man who has achieved this feat!" he said. "There are individuals who stand above destiny and actually shape it; such men are geniuses of infinite rarity, like Frederick the Great; and then there are the less gifted, who none the less possess rare qualities, so that the world makes use of them to produce great things. Such a one is King William, whose uprightness and honesty serve the precise purpose of compassing the downfall of the French. Where a capacity for living still exists, nature simply attaches herself to us and produces miracles. But where there are organic defects, she abandons one entirely. That is why there are no men in France now. I expect great things of the new Empire; it is wonderful that it should have grown out of the nature of things and not out of the form, as did the old German imperial idea, which was ruined by its mildness and not by its strength. The whole policy of foreign powers was directed towards one thing alone — the crippling of the Emperor. The wonderful thing is that he is now arising again of his own accord and today finds in legitimacy at once a support and a protection against the unitary State." And he was truly happy in the thought that he lived at such a time and had found a wife at such a time, too, who had borne him a son. He said to her with the utmost enthusiasm: "Nature willed that I should have a son, and you alone could bear this son. Everything else would have been bondage and a monstrosity. It is this that has given us strength to accomplish and endure unheard-of things in order to become united. This must be our consolation, for the purposes of nature look far beyond anything else."

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[1] "*An das deutsche Heer vor Paris,*" January 1871.—Tr.

They made a great deal of music at home. In December Wagner had formed a quartet for the performance of the *Siegfried Idyll*, and it now gave him much pleasure by playing Beethoven's later quartets. It was after one such performance, on January 30, that he said to his wife: " You are my imperial crown." And when the performance of the *Idyll* was now repeated, he explained its whole origin. It was developed from the theme which had occurred to him while they were together at Starnberg and which he had promised her for a quartet. " And now unconsciously I have woven into it our whole being," he said: " Fidi's birth, my recovery, Fidi's bird, etc. For so it is that the musician creates; as Shakspere says, he expresses in his own language what reason cannot grasp." We see how this work sprang from the depths of his nature and expressed his most profound experiences. We must regard as a pendant to this his feeling for the outer world — that is, the war — a feeling which he expressed in the Coronation March in honour of the new Kaiser, the themes for which poured into his mind almost as a result of his convalescence, for he felt that he had no quarrel with a life that had brought so much happiness both to him and to her.

The turn taken by the relations between Frau Cosima and her brother-in-law Émile Ollivier was most singular. The war had driven him entirely out of her thoughts. Her sentiments were too grandly German, too artistic, and too political to allow her to give any consideration to the brother-in-law who, as minister, had allowed himself to lose control of political affairs and to be dragged in the wake of the fantastic and fanatical Grammont. But now, from his lonely refuge in Turin, Ollivier himself turned to Frau Cosima, whose lot was now so completely happy. She was unable to meet his advances, and her feelings reflected the spirit of King William's reply to the letter addressed to him by Ollivier, in which he said that Ollivier's whole life would not suffice to blot out the crime which he had committed against France and against Europe, even if he were to do penance on his knees. She was just and logical to the core, in her conception of ecclesiastical matters as well, and the accounts that now came to her from all quarters challenged both her critical and her historical sense. She thought of Conradin's fate and expressed the view that all the enemies of the Hohenstaufen had been of the French type in their narrow sympathies and cruelty.

But all this was thrown into the shade by the great joy caused them at home when, on February 5, the Master completed the orchestral score of *Siegfried.* " I am lingering by his side," she writes, " while he writes the concluding words. This is the event of today, which fills me with rapture." So great was her emotion that even Luise von Bülow's account of the last moments of her son Heinz, who had fallen in the war and of whom she had been so fond, was powerless to produce an impression on her. He had died with the words "Dear Fatherland, now mayst thou rest (*Lieb' Vaterland, magst ruhig sein*)" upon his lips. Even the Coronation March seemed to her to be a merely superficial thing by comparison with *Siegfried.*

How much more was this true of Frau Wesendonck's new drama *Friedrich der Grosse* (*Frederick the Great*), written under the influence of the impressions produced by the Franco-German war, which she now sent to the Master. He simply did not read it, and in her letter of thanks Frau Cosima spoke earnestly and warmly about the subject without saying a word about the book itself. But on reading the letter he was almost indignant: " What language is left for the highest things," he said, " if we treat silly stuff in this way? " " When I replied that it was impossible for me to fail to give people their due who had shown him friendliness and with whom he had been in sympathy, he answered: ' If this is really done out of consideration for me, I feel absolutely degraded. In order that no sentimental (*weichlich*) mistakes should arise in this affair, I sent this lady back her letters and had mine burnt, because I do not want anything at all to survive that could lead people to assume that there had been any serious relations between us. If I ever spoke in the tone which you adopt in this letter, I have had enough reason to expiate it." This made her sad, as did also the news that Nietzsche had left for Italy without taking leave of them. The Master, indeed, drew gloomy deductions from this proceeding, not wholly without reason; for Nietzsche was somewhat of a worldling, and it may well be that Frau Cosima's suggestions had rather offended his vanity, though he followed them entirely.

The news that came to them from the outer world was not very gratifying, whether it came through Cornelius or from other communications on the subject of Berlin, especially a letter which Frau Cosima received from a former maidservant, describing the misery there, and, characteristically enough, this led her to formulate ideas similar to those which were afterwards to play so great a part with Bismarck. She and Wagner talked of the large cities and agreed that these must cease to exist, since they produced the mob (*Pöbel*), and the mob was un-German. It was much to be regretted, they said, that the first Reichstag had been summoned to meet in Berlin. Wagner would have liked to see the revival of the small towns, such as Erfurt, Halberstadt; instead of which the large cities kept growing ever larger and, under an appearance of prosperity, formed a most malignant canker, which was a danger to the Empire. We know how, a few years later, Bismarck took up this idea and, in one of his most celebrated speeches in the Reichstag, threatened to remove the seat of parliament to a small town, because in Berlin the representatives of the people were degenerating into professional politicians and so were ceasing to represent the people. It is remarkable how clear and definite the political conceptions of these two were during these great days of German development.

But here a wonderful parallel suggests itself between the evolution of German affairs on the one hand and that of the Bayreuth question on the other; and from November onwards this dominated the daily thoughts of this lonely couple, though only as a sort of undercurrent. If the Master chose as the subject of his discourse before the Berlin Academy, not his *Beethoven*, but another subject, *The Essential Nature of Opera*, this was all part of his idea that, now that the Empire was being founded, the creation of his theatre should also be proceeded with. The

King had given up the plan of building it in Munich and contented himself as best he might with including Wagner's works in the repertoire of his court theatre, an idea which is in no way incomprehensible and for which he cannot be blamed; for that which is exceptional never fits in with a system, unless this system is made absolutely subservient to the great idea. Even Bismarck had to make this discovery in a reverse sense. Human transgressions " are still transmitted, like an eternal sickness of the race." [1] But not a single day passed without a discussion about Bayreuth, though for the present no mention was made of that place in the Master's plans, so far as these were published to the world. But they were both overjoyed at coming across a description of the Bayreuth Opera-house while reading Carlyle. Thus a visit to Bayreuth naturally suggested itself in connexion with the idea of a journey to Berlin. The more their personal destiny became bound up with the course of events, the more intense was the interest with which they watched the development of affairs. Thus Frau Cosima became absorbed in Constantin Frantz's works on the German Empire, from which she drew the conclusion: " Who would not at least begin to hope, now that the Germans display such strength? " But she also expounded her views on the idea of unification without the unbounded optimism cherished by others in those days. " One can explain the whole world," she writes, " by the fact that those like in kind are separated and are seeking each other, while those unlike in kind are thrown together — a state of affairs chronically rooted in the nature of things. If all those who are like in kind were to come together, the result would be harmony, but it would no longer be life: it would be the Nirvana of Buddhism. A great cleavage (*Entzweiung*) has been the creative force in nature. Of course this is even less possible for us to conceive than the state of complete harmony precluding life; hence the popular saying: ' How bored one must get in paradise! ' "

The first disappointment that befell the Master was in connexion with the *Kaisermarsch*, both during its composition and, still more, from the fate that awaited it. While he was writing it, he was angry and full of disgust with the work. " I cannot do a thing of this sort," he grumbled, " when no ideas suggest themselves in connexion with it, and if I do think of something, there is no end to it (*so geht's ins Grenzenlose*). A march is an absurd affair. At most it can only be a people's song (*Volkslied*), yet at the same time it is not intended to be sung; it is nonsensical. But I must have my great thread, on which I develop my music. I can do nothing in this way." The great fugue which would be in place here, on the Beethoven model, was too difficult, he said. Nor, indeed, had it been his wish to use the *Kaisermarsch* in any sense as a means towards the realization of his great idea. The inspiration came from quite a different quarter, and it was solely through his great enthusiasm for things German that it had any connexion with his deeper artistic life, in which the work thus originated.

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[1] *Faust*, Sc. iv, Bayard Taylor's translation.—Tr.

But now another trouble arose. The King was clamouring for *Siegfried*. It was clear that he wanted to have it performed just as he had done with *The Valkyrie*. It is true that during those July days in Munich the latter had had a topical bearing on German affairs. The public had greeted the Valkyries' war-cry with unprecedented applause, and, above all, Wotan's words:

Denn wo kühne Kräfte sich regen,
Da rat' ich offen zum Krieg.

(For where brave spirits are moving
I spur them ever to strife.)[1]

The public of course delight in anything which at supreme moments of its existence offers itself, as it were, in the form of a motto, and in such times a work of art has much the same effect as a popular orator. But Wagner was determined not to let *Siegfried* out of his hands. This, however, brought him into conflict with the headstrong King, who wanted to have the first two acts performed, for the third act was not yet finished. But now Wagner had this third act bound and presented it to Frau Cosima, who received it with unbounded delight. " A new treasure in my room," she writes in her diary; and she had no intention of giving it up for any purpose but the performance of the whole work.

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[1] *The Valkyrie*, II, i.—Tr.

This happened just when they were proposing to pay a visit to Zürich. An invitation had arrived from the kind Frau Wesendonck, and so, on February 17, in response to the urgent entreaties of his wife, Richard Wagner once more entered the house on the Green Hill. " I am delighted to have succeeded in this," she writes; " Frau Wesendonck was obviously delighted to see Richard again and to see him looking happy. He was a little disturbed at her hair having turned black, but he got used to it, and she was good-natured and friendly." The visit included a soirée at the hotel, where they gave their guests a concert, at which the same quartet as had given them so many pleasant hours at Triebschen played a number of Frau Cosima's favourite pieces. Next day they visited the Willes, where the children felt much more at ease than amid the brilliance and splendour on the Green Hill, with the beautiful toys. But as Wagner and his wife returned home, they said: " Our proper place is no longer among mankind, we are only happy by ourselves and at home." And the Master said: " Here is my world."

They found a letter awaiting them from the King, written in the old cordial spirit, asking the Master to acquaint him with his wishes, which the latter did in clear and definite terms; for the time for their visit to Germany was rapidly approaching. Scattered notices were already beginning to appear in the newspapers about the Master's plans, and an alleged petition to the King of Prussia for the erection of a theatre was mentioned. These notices were undoubtedly inserted in the press with the intention of prejudicing the King of Bavaria against his friend. This only made Wagner and his wife cling all the more firmly to Bayreuth, the more so as in that place the theatre would not have to be situated outside the dominions of the royal friend who had once showered such favours upon them. And to all these plans and discussions was added their anxiety about the financial future. In 1870, it is true, a change had taken place in the position as regards royalties, by which composers were at last guaranteed the right to a share in the receipts from the performance of their works. But another and stronger hand, more skilled in business matters than that of Wagner, was needed to clear up these questions in connexion with the Master's works. It was reserved for [Adolf von Gross] the friend whom they found in Bayreuth to perform this service for the Master by his clear vision and his unflagging energy and fidelity during years of effort. At that time, however, there was absolutely no money for the journey. " One simply must have something to eat (*beissen*)," said the Master, " and when you are able to eat, you end by having nothing to eat." Whereupon she asked anxiously: " Is it as bad as all that? " To which he answered with a sigh: " God knows! We may still, perhaps, have need of much courage and patience." But he would not let such things turn him aside from his purpose, and Frau Cosima had but one thought, which was to be a worthy helpmeet to him. These preoccupations did not make him forget the greatness of the times, and when the report went round that Metz was only to be handed over to Germany after its fortifications had been razed, he was violently upset and gave vent to his feelings in the very topical verses:

So the whole chase was vain,
Razed Metz is all our gain.

(*Darum die ganze Hetz',*
Um nur zu schleifen Metz.)

But it is wonderful how at this very time their hearts beat most ardently in harmony, how she absorbed herself in his plans and lived in his works, making his ideas her own, and having no thoughts apart from his existence. Just at this time the first case of cremation was announced. It was a Count Pückler who had provided for this in his will, saying that his ashes were to be preserved in an urn; whereupon she wrote in her diary: " I desire this for Richard and myself and am prepared to become a Protestant, if only that I may be burned and buried with him." On the same day they read the wonderful lay in the Edda on the death of Brünhild, " which I only understand through the medium of *The Ring*, but the contents of its last strophe are simply overwhelming. . . . But Sigurd and I will remain together. . . . And this," she thought, "shall be our epitaph." But this idea, too, was already intimately associated with Bayreuth. And after a tender speech meant to make amends for his violence, Richard said to her: "The end of *Tristan* tells you all; that gives you the meaning of our life!" And they vowed not to be separated for a single day in their lives.

The visit to Germany and Bayreuth drew nearer and nearer. One thing alone stood in the way — the King's silence. But Wagner found comfort in his own self-reliance, and drew fresh strength even from his dreams. "Richard tells me," she writes, "that he has again had the dream which he so often dreamed before his first meeting with the King of Bavaria, in which the Prussian King Frederick William IV overwhelmed him with consideration and favour and showed him boundless love, so that when he first saw King Ludwig, he thought that he was seeing the realization of his dream." And so they would not let themselves be turned away from their ideas, which he summed up in the words of the great phrase: "The poet must be both singer and seer." He declared that the three of them alone, he and Cosima and Richter, would create Bayreuth; there would be no stage-manager, but only somebody to look after the money. And so he composed his brochure *Über die Aufführung des Bühnenfestspieles: Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*On the production of the stage festival play: The Ring of the Nibelung*), which appeared on April 21 and published his ideas abroad to the world. He wanted to be quite independent, bound by no contract, but supported and protected by subscriptions alone. This was also in harmony with Frau Cosima's desires; for she had a horror of all personal interference and was even anxious that their plans should be carried out without any application to Berlin. But still no word came from the King! Yet his consent was of supreme importance.

Meanwhile news reached them of an impending visit from her mother, which set both their minds in a turmoil. Frau Cosima looked forward to her mother's arrival with some anxiety, ardently and vehemently though she desired it; but she would not hear of anything that might come between her and her husband; and this seemed to her an alien element. How beautiful it is when she writes: "When I listen to music I feel more and more deeply how I love Richard. Life seems to me like something parting us. I should like to die, in order to live for ever unparted from him. We took refuge in my room. I told him what I felt. He called me his youth, his soul. 'In this life,' he went on, 'it is as though we were at a fair; we are strangers everywhere. One belongs nowhere. We are consuming ourselves all the time. It is our love, our children, that makes us happy, and that is why the atmosphere that comes from the outside world is hostile. Nowhere are we understood, all that we desire is madness to others.'" As we see, this was a time, not only of great tension and anxiety, but also of intense inward ferment; in all their ideas about the art-work and how it was to be carried out, about the world and the State, and about all personal relations too, they were conscious only of themselves.

She now began, with filial tact, to prepare to receive her mother. While setting her old papers in order, she came across the old letters from her father, which once again convinced her that she had had neither father nor mother. "Richard has been all in all to me," she writes; "he alone has loved me." On March 24 she drove to the station to meet her mother, but it was six o'clock before the latter arrived. She was still in possession of her old intelligence and sensibilities and seemed well and cheerful, in spite of what she had been through and what still awaited her. After a stormy night we see the mother and daughter sitting together, talking over the past and future: "She likes being here," writes Frau Cosima, "I feel very much of a stranger to her — yet her great culture makes her very agreeable. We have much talk on all subjects. In particular, she draws an alarming picture of conditions in Paris, with her usual vivacity. On the other hand, the children have a calming effect upon her and give her pleasure. She thinks them very good and shows a certain gentleness towards them." She stayed till April 1, obtaining during this visit a deep insight into her son-in-law's music, the prayer from *Lohengrin*, in particular, moving her to tears. She was too remarkable a woman, both intellectually and spiritually, not to understand what was new in this world over which her daughter presided, though it was, of course, very different from her own, and she would never have been able to feel at home in it. But she understood and was impressed by *Tristan* when the Master read her the first act; and when he played her excerpts from his works, she was quite overwhelmed by the power of his art. " Yet everything revolved, as it were, in a circle," writes Frau Cosima. " All our troubles were revived, and our conversations brought but little comfort." On leaving, however, the Countess carried away with her an impression of something great, and she too had made an impression on the Master, who thanked her for her visit in beautiful and significant terms. This produced a twofold reaction upon Cosima's heart, since it lessened the discord which she felt to exist between her mother and herself, now that she, too, was living in a state of complete estrangement from her father. After the Paris bankers had re-established their connexions with Germany, he had arranged for her income to be paid to her, not as " Frau Cosima Wagner," but as the " Baroness von Bülow," which had given her husband deep and justifiable offence. She had therefore been forced to write to her father to put an end to this slight, and Franz Liszt had given way.

But after her mother's departure her filial feelings found a vent. " I was much affected," she writes, " when I embraced her for the last time; the whole sadness of her life came over me." In appearance their meeting had been no more than an episode, but it was significant so far as her feelings were concerned: it reforged the link which connected her thoughts with the past, and drew closer the bonds connecting her with her French kinsfolk, whose existence, after all, could not be ignored. The way had already been paved for this by her half-sister the Countess Charnacé, who, so soon as the siege of Paris was raised, had written her a letter which, with wonderful and truly aristocratic reticence, avoided all reference to the catastrophe, and touched on personal relations alone. If any special impression remained with her from her mother's visit, it was the painful feeling of being cut off from her father — the only feeling which she had to suppress in the presence of her husband until the day of his death, and which now dominated her with full force.

Preparations had next to be made for their journey, which was in a sense already casting its shadow before it into the *Reich.* Thus Richter wrote from Munich that there was talk there of an agreement between Triebschen, the King, and the Emperor for the production of the *Nibelungen* at Bayreuth — though malice undoubtedly had something to do with this. Then came a letter from Düfflipp repeating the King's request for *Siegfried,* and telling Wagner how offended His Majesty was at the harsh and bitter things which he had written about the performance at Munich. None the less, the King was willing to send Düfflipp to him, in accordance with his wish. The Master made an appointment to meet him at Augsburg, which meant fresh misunderstandings; for he feared that once again he would simply not be understood — a fear which Frau Cosima shared. At any rate, their hours in Switzerland now seemed to be numbered, and it was a singular coincidence that, as a result of the anti-German doings in Zürich, the Wesendonck family at the same time abandoned their home there and settled in Dresden. Frau Mathilde informed them of this in a " colourless (*nichtssagend*) " letter, in spite of which, Frau Cosima writes: " I always feel attracted by all that comes from that quarter, for she was once good to Richard." So preparations were made for the journey, a mass of letters were dispatched, the circulars to be distributed to the patrons were drawn up, and everything that could be done was done. Yet Frau Cosima's heart was heavy, and she asked herself why she dreaded this journey so much. Everything, indeed, was still in a commotion, so that she says: " My feelings about this journey become gloomier and gloomier. I feel as though it were a crime for me to come into contact with the world again." They started on April 14 and were met by Düfflipp, representing the King, in Augsburg. He once more intimated the royal desire for a performance of the first two acts of *Siegfried.* Richard replied gravely that rather than give it up under such circumstances, he would burn it and then go a-begging. Meanwhile Frau Cosima visited the Museum with Peter Cornelius to see the beautiful Holbeins and the head by Leonardo da Vinci. Then they resumed their journey as far as Nuremberg, where she was absolutely overcome by Dürer's *Christ.* "I shed tears of deep emotion," she writes. "Here is the German nature in all its kindliness, in its purely human, tranquil sublimity! It has nothing in common with Spanish ecstasy or asceticism. It is more moving than these, which to us can at times appear cruel and even cold." In their railway carriage was a Bavarian officer who had served at the front during the campaign, and she looked at him with positive reverence.

They arrived at Bayreuth on the afternoon of April 17, and their impression of the town was extraordinarily pleasing. But during the night the Master fell ill, and she sent for the doctor. "This is a grave case," he said, "we shall see how it turns out." "But I could not help laughing," adds Frau Cosima, "when he said: 'What things can happen to one! Who would have told me that I should make Richard Wagner's acquaintance tonight!' On entering he asked: 'Are you Richard Wagner — I mean *the* Richard Wagner?' to which Richard replied: 'You mean the one who wrote all those pretty things? Yes, I am he.' Richard is getting better, but he has to stay in bed. I read him Goethe's *Italienische Reise* (*Italian Tour*) and received a visit from Frau Raila, whose husband is a captain and was wounded at Sedan."

He soon recovered, however, in spite of the terrible din at the hotel, where the cavalry regiment was holding its festive gathering. "We drove to the theatre," she writes; "a charming monument, which speaks volumes for the productivity of German art in the eighteenth century. It preserves something of the fantastic spirit which inspired the German art of the sixteenth century, though one feels this to have been greatly disfigured by the scroll-work, shells, etc., of the eighteenth century. The theatre, however, is entirely unsuited for our purposes; so we must build, which is all the better. Now to find a house. We drove all over the place; there was nothing quite suitable, so there is nothing for it but to build for ourselves too. Beautiful drive to the Eremitage. The old custodian there was delighted to see Richard and said that it was only the parsons who had separated Richard from the King, and that the people love him. The population of Bayreuth is in a perfect turmoil at his presence here." They left on the next day. At the station an old writer of popular ballads came up to them, offering his poems for sale, among them some on the Master himself. "Richard said that here was the real object of our journey." Then a cripple approached, and they were both touched by his dreadful appearance. "With boundless kindness and the deepest sympathy my husband gave him a trifle, and since people never seemed to shut the door, I begged him to perform this function, which he discharged in the most conscientious way."

From Bayreuth they went on to Leipzig, where they met with a great reception, with laurel-wreaths, poems, and transparencies. They stayed at the Hôtel de Prusse, where the landlord had placed the royal suite at their disposal. Next day was the rehearsal, at which Wagner was so shocked at the bad condition of the orchestra that he was determined to cancel even the concert in Berlin too, for which every facility had been placed at his disposal by the Emperor's orders. In the end, however, everything went off after a fashion, though the whole proceedings had something positively ghostly about them in Frau Cosima's eyes. It was a moving experience for her to walk through the streets with him, to gaze upon the house where he was born, and absorb herself utterly in her beloved husband's past. Still more was this so in Dresden, where they received a kindly welcome from his old friend Pusinelli. The Master's sister Luise also gave her a most friendly reception, and there were numbers of other acquaintances: they had a merry meeting with the Countess Krockow and went to see the Wesendoncks, who had already made themselves quite at home there. Frau Cosima was especially delighted to hear from Luise how mild and fatherly she found Richard to have become, and how grateful she was to her for her courage in marrying him. "I remarked, indeed, that my happiness is my courage." In the evening they went to the wooden building which served to house the performances pending the completion of the new court theatre. It held a large audience, and Wagner took note of everything with a view to Bayreuth. But here she was in her element: she went to the picture gallery chiefly so as to show her husband the *Tribute Money*. “ At first,” she writes, “ he was quite disturbed by the individual character of the face of Christ, but then the whole wonder of it was revealed to him, for it is not without a tinge of aristocratic superiority. To my delight, my favourite Madonna, by Titian, pleases Richard very much too. After this I showed him nearly the whole gallery, closing with a reverential tribute to the Sistine Madonna.”

Next there was a luncheon at Pusinelli’s, whose numerous family delighted her greatly, especially the eldest boy, Karl. When they went into the garden after dinner, the Master climbed the highest tree in it. “ We were, however, overcome by a boundless melancholy,” she writes, “ and in the evening, while our friends all went to the performance of *The Mastersingers,* we wandered about the streets. When will death at last draw nigh? While we have the children about us, we feel it our duty to live; but when we mix with people, the longing for death comes over us with almost irresistible force. I saw the shop where Richard sold Schiller’s poems in order to buy jam-puffs, and where he gave money to a crippled soldier, while his father watched him from the house opposite. I also saw the uncannily silent corners of the city, and Richard told me how the Terrace, the Frauenkirche, etc., had affected him when he was young. We approached the theatre. I wanted to listen, to see what point they had reached in *The Mastersingers*. We could hear it from a distance, but near at hand we could catch nothing. Suddenly a run on the clarinet reached our ears, it was like *Tristan and Isolde*. We returned home, it was cold out of doors, and I was crying.”

Such was the mood in which Frau Cosima entered Germany, in which her husband and his work were now to triumph. She stood beside him, not in joy and proud hope, but full of heavy care and, what is more, with a feeling of almost ominous melancholy. Such was the mood in which she took leave of Dresden, where she was deeply impressed by the words of one of the orchestra, who had come to the station: “ If only we could have the chance of playing under your baton again! ” Then the journey continued — “ Off to Berlin,” she writes. “ It is as though my heart was under lock and key; my place is no longer among mankind." Yet in this very place she was to be plunged into the thick of the world, which made her so nervous. Among the many people who now flocked round and greeted the Master, there were, of course, many with whom she had long been on friendly terms; above all, Marie von Schleinitz, who had in the mean time seen to everything the Master wanted for the concert in the court theatre, settling matters first with the Emperor, and then, backed by the weight of his authority, with the Intendant. Her laughing eyes sparkled with pleasure at being able to welcome her beautiful friend once more. There was, of course, a great deal of fuss, which perturbed Frau Cosima and more especially Wagner, not to speak of all the ceremonies. "They are all good people," he said, "but bad musicians."

A meeting was now held at the house of Count Schleinitz which was not only critical but had important after effects. It was attended, among others, by Tausig, who had taken up the idea of Bayreuth with uncommon enthusiasm and devoted himself to it in a touching way. Frau Cosima could not believe her ears when she heard how Bismarck was spoken of in these circles, and was amazed at the tone which they dared to adopt in mentioning the Chancellor: "He has more luck than wits, and no character." She was therefore glad to see Lothar Bucher again, the great man's trusty henchman. How changed she found everything, though scarcely seven years had gone by since she left Berlin! She went with her husband to call upon her old friend Alwine Frommann, reader to the Empress, and the visit was like a scene from a night-piece of Hoffmann's. When they arrived at the palace, the sentries were just closing the grille, but opened it again. They passed through the empty courts and at last, after losing their way, were directed by the palace apothecary to the old lady's apartments. They rang the bell — a long silence. At last a lamentable voice cried out: "Who is there?" "Wagner," replied the Master. Silence followed and, at last, a piteous "Oh, God!" "May we come in?" "Oh no! I am in bed." "Will you dine with us tomorrow?" "With pleasure." "At two o'clock?" "But that is when I am in the palace." "At three o'clock?" "But that is when you will have callers." "All this," adds Frau Cosima, "through the letter-box, as if she had been in the cellar. Richard and I thought of old Moor and felt inclined to shiver at this ghostly apparition." When the old lady appeared on the following day, the impression was of course quite a different one, though still quite a bit of the *ancien régime.* She was immensely delighted at seeing her beautiful young friend again. She was in a good temper and had all sorts of good and encouraging news to tell them, for as reader to the Empress she was naturally the first to hear of what went on in the palace. She would make an enchanting figure in a novel or a historical comedy — a sort of pendant to the *Dame Blanche* — except for the heroic tinge of her character. Similar thoughts no doubt occupied Frau Cosima's mind at that time; but she was horrified at coming across the journalist Dr. Julius Lang in Berlin, as she had done before in Munich; and, in spite of his unworthy conduct, he produced upon her the impression of a haunting spectre, owing to the sudden way in which he kept on appearing.

Frau Cosima's whole state of mind forms a curious background to the great and powerful impression now made by Richard Wagner in Berlin. He thought as she did, and would have liked to pack up at once and leave. But, as he said, in a spirit of profound resignation: "One has only to want something to find that one has lost one's liberty." But as a protégé of the amiable and influential Frau von Schleinitz he stood, as it were, between two worlds. For her benefit and that of the Princess Liechtenstein he gave a reading of the sketch for *Parsifal.* The impression produced was one of indescribable emotion, and Frau Cosima is echoing the opinion of the Countess von Schleinitz when she writes: "Even if not a note or a verse of it is ever written, this sketch is eternal and perhaps the sublimest vision that Wagner has ever seen." But everything went off in a pleasant and friendly way. There was the great banquet, at which Wilhelm Tappert toasted the Master, and next day the concert at the Singakademie, to which they were taken by their old friend Weitzmann, and where the prologue, composed by Ernst Dohm, was spoken by the Master's niece

Johanna, who, now that he had become " great," had abandoned her original attitude of aloofness and coldness and felt herself to be his " niece." It was a joy to Frau Cosima that her old friend Dohm was now paying a tribute of honour to her great husband.

But the climax was assuredly marked by Wagner's visit to Bismarck. Bucher had brought him a request from the Imperial Chancellor that he would call upon him, after which he was invited and received in due form. Nothing that has been said or written about this interview, even by the " Prince's historiographer," Poschinger, equals the impression that Frau Cosima has preserved in her diary: " Richard returned in a highly contented frame of mind," she writes. " A great and simple nature had revealed itself to him. When Richard assured him of his veneration, he said: ' The only thing that can be counted to me as a merit is that from time to time I have secured a signature. All I have done is to discover the hole in the crown through which the smoke can pass.' Richard was quite enchanted with the genuine amiability of his nature. There was no trace of reticence about him, but an easy address, the most cordial communicativeness, inspiring entire confidence and sympathy. ' But,' said Wagner, ' we can only look on at each other's work, each accomplishing something in his own sphere. I should not presume to win him over to the support of my cause or to present him with any petition. But none the less this meeting remains of the greatest value to me.' " Thus Frau Cosima has preserved in the clearest and most authoritative manner a record of the great moment when the two supreme geniuses of Germany met face to face. This was, moreover, entirely in accordance with her own nature and desires. Many people had thought that they ought to play off the court of Berlin, and the German Empire, with the Chancellor at its head, against the King of Bavaria; but this would have been repugnant to Richard Wagner's sense of honour, and still more so to the delicate and profound sentiments of his noble wife. Yet at this very time an opportunity and even an excuse for such a course might have offered itself; for while in Berlin, Wagner heard from Munich that Frau Mallinger had failed to obtain permission to sing at his concert. The Master's only comment was that he had nothing to do with the concert in itself. A most discouraging letter arrived from Düfflipp, which was certainly inspired by a touch of jealousy of Berlin, and announced somewhat ominously that the King would have absolutely nothing to do with the Bayreuth project, but wanted to have everything brought to Munich for his own benefit; to which Wagner sent an answer from Berlin in measured terms to the effect that the Bayreuth project was his final plan, and that if it did not meet with acceptance, he would give it up and henceforth live only for his family. It was one of those great moments in which he was supremely himself, owing to the consciousness that he possessed this glorious woman. And she writes proudly: "He tells me what happiness it gives him to hear his family spoken of. He is nearly always thinking of the children with a touching tenderness, he is so happy that paradise is full of these little ones."

The attitude of Baron von Hülsen, the General Intendant of the Berlin Court Theatre, must be regarded as forming in some measure a contrast with the interview with Bismarck and the relation between Wagner and his exalted protector in Munich. From this we see the vast difference between Bismarck, the great statesman and true nobleman, and the General Intendant, who was really no more than the representative of those disreputable hangers-on of the court who had played a sinister role at the court of Berlin since the days of the Great Elector. After the Emperor had promised the Master all that he desired, the Intendant gave contrary orders and instructed the orchestra not to obey Wagner, saying that the fellow had no right to give orders there; let him be content to wield his baton. Frau Cosima was told of this, but said nothing to her husband. She was, however, deeply hurt and expressed her intention of not going to the concert. This was the signal for him to refuse to conduct; whereupon she pulled herself together, dressed, and drove with him to the concert. We know what an impression it made. Marie Schleinitz stepped into her box in all her glory, having on her own initiative defeated another piece of malice on the part of von Hülsen. He had given orders that the conductor's stand was not to be decorated with wreaths and that people bringing bouquets were not to be admitted; upon which he was summoned before the wife of the Minister of the Royal House and, with the cowardice which always characterizes the minions of a court, cringingly explained that it was all due to a misunderstanding. The Master heard nothing of all these proceedings and was in a very good humour, especially when the first violin of the court orchestra said to him after the concert: "You can have no idea how these things are intrigued against here." And such was indeed the case. The marked contrast between the leading men in the Prussian State and the court cabal, which did nothing but the greatest harm whenever it acquired any influence, was evident under the old Emperor too. But enthusiasm had now been aroused, and when she called upon her friend the Countess Schleinitz the next morning, Frau Cosima was able to hear every sort of flattering comment. The Emperor had declared that he had never heard anything so perfect as this concert; it had been sublime. Even the fire-eating old General Boyen, who had been present at the matinée at the Singakademie and heard the *Faust Overture*, told the Emperor that he had never had such an experience before. After luncheon a meeting of the Bayreuth Committee took place, at which Tausig made a speech which showed, not only clear views, but a warm heart as well.

Frau Cosima took no part in this meeting. Her stay in Berlin closed with a visit to the grave of her beloved Daniel, on which the Countess Krockow accompanied her. She was in a deep and solemn frame of mind: "He was a victim of the carelessness of my father and mother and the cruel indifference of the Princess Wittgenstein. I was too young and inexperienced at the time to take energetic action and interfere. How my heart suffers, especially beside this grave! Where art thou, whither does thy pure spirit guide or call me? Still dost thou live in my soul. Might it be that the children, perhaps Siegfried, have absorbed thy being?" She spoke in this strain to the Countess, who had known him well: after which she writes: "Then we left Berlin, as though in a dream. All things are indifferent to him who has been face to face with death. It was on the eve of

Daniel's birthday. On May 9 he would have been thirty-two years old."

They next returned to Leipzig, where they received a more friendly letter from Councillor Düfflipp, informing them that the King was making a first concession and would subscribe twenty-five thousand thalers to the enterprise. This was a beginning, and it must be said that the only thing lacking to the right management of this business in Munich now was that there was nobody competent to exert the right influence over the King. In Leipzig they heard that the treaty of peace had been ratified. The meeting between the Chancellor and Richard Wagner had taken place immediately before Bismarck left for Frankfurt. Bucher had been right when he wrote to Frau Cosima: "We shall bring back peace to the world." In Leipzig she now saw the house with the white lion and the red in which Richard Wagner had been born, and visited the place where his parents had once lived. Then there were interesting meetings with one or two professors who were friends of their relative Brockhaus, especially Ebers, the Egyptologist and novelist, and Czermack, a physicist who had made researches on the theory of colour. Wagner reproached the latter with having spoken slightingly of Schopenhauer, of whose works he had made a profound study himself and in whom he recognized an absolutely prophetic insight. Ebers gave him a lecture illustrated by Egyptian pictures. Frau Cosima sums him up shortly and to the point: "He is a Jew, too, and his talk is shallow and fluent." But they discovered one thing of some importance: their nephew Clemens Brockhaus told them that Nietzsche, who had dedicated his *Homer* to Frau Cosima, had dedicated it to his sister too, and with the same poem, upon which she remarks: "At first I could not help laughing at this, but later, when I talked it over with Richard, it seemed to me a dubious trait, like a mania for betrayal, as though he were trying to defend himself against an overmastering impression."

For the rest, however, she felt very much at home among their Leipzig relations. It was now, too, that she made the acquaintance of Heinrich von Treitschke. As he was already completely deaf, she could not, of course, make the impression upon him which she would doubtless have done had their intercourse been prolonged.

They next proceeded to Darmstadt to meet Herr Brandt, director of stage machinery at the court opera-house. On their way through Thuringia they passed Weimar, which awakened melancholy memories. It was particularly painful to Frau Cosima to know that her father was in Weimar and yet to pass the city by; and she writes resignedly: " My father is there, but I did not see him." At Frankfurt they recalled Schopenhauer and also " that moment in August 1863 when I told Richard that I was quite ready to take my seat on the hand-barrow if he would push it, as he then proposed to do." The interview with Brandt went off well and promisingly, and it was in a contented mood that they left the little capital and travelled on to Heidelberg, where they saw the castle at sunset, and, while gazing at this wonderful picture, the Master told her that he had already been there before, and confessed why he had never mentioned this to her. Those had been dark days, he said; he had wandered about here with Minna and looked at everything so absent-mindedly and indifferently. They next stopped before a puppet-show (*Kasperletheater*), and we know what a great impression this play now made upon the Master. She, too, was delighted with it, particularly with the words in which Kasperle took his leave: " The lights will now be spat out (*ausgespuckt*)." " This," she writes, " was the brightest moment of the whole journey." Nothing sums up their " Journey into the Empire (*Fahrt ins Reich*)" better than these words of the young wife, who was longing with her whole soul to be at home once more. After a delightful evening in Basel, during which Nietzsche and Friedrich Brockhaus put in an appearance, they returned home to Triebschen, and she wrote exultantly in her diary: " What an incomparable feeling of bliss, to be back once more in one's own world! "

So the old life at once began again, though their relations with the outer world had been restored and necessitated a lively correspondence. She was now once more on intimate terms with Judith Mendès, who was keeping her husband in hiding at Orléans, after he had been condemned to death by the Commune, but had escaped from these horrors and been rescued by his wife. Once again they took down their Carlyle and now read with great appreciation of the campaigns of Frederick the Great, not without some criticism of the battle of Torgau and the behaviour of the gallant old Ziethen. And in spite of all critical examination the figure of the mighty King was justified in their eyes. But when the Master read her his announcement on the subject of Bayreuth, she wrote: " Everything leaves me cold, I was seized with ecstasy only when Richard spoke to me of Bayreuth and showed me the first draft of his appeal. I cannot place myself in the position of the public; but feel as though, once it is given to the public, the whole thing is cut off from me. Richard says that he quite shares the same feeling; he knows that we shall issue our communications to the world with a cold joy, watchful and observing; we have no need of such things ourselves, our delight is in the idea." We see from this how it was nothing but the feeling of his duty as an artist towards the work and the people that could induce him and her to leave the solitude of Triebschen and embark upon new ventures and achievements in the world outside. But at the very time when his birthday came round again, she was filled with deep and depressing thoughts about him. Thus she writes on the morning of May 22: " Awake all night, thinking of Richard, for life without him is unthinkable to me. How little I can do to make him happy, how gladly would I spare him every atom of pain! On the night before, Hans appeared to me, with grey hair and beard, weeping. This affected me deeply, but I feel that I was bound to dedicate myself to Richard, God grant that I may do so wholly for his good." Then she got up at four o'clock and went into the drawing-room to prepare for the festivities. Everything was arranged round his bust. She herself put on the costume of Sieglinde, Daniela was dressed as Senta, Blandine as Elisabeth, Eva and Isolde as their namesakes, while, as Sieglinde, she carried the boy Siegfried in her arms. He was deeply moved and said that " seeing me in the character of Sieglinde had reminded him of our return from Italy." In the afternoon Nietzsche came and discussed with the Master the founding of a periodical, which was to be called the

Reformationszeitschrift and was to appear in two years' time. The King, too, sent a warm and cordial telegram. His attitude, indeed, must not be judged from the communications of his secretariate, as transmitted to the Master by the good-natured Düfflipp, though the latter undoubtedly meant well. But Wagner did not understand that during the months following the entry of the troops the King had been in an extremely bitter frame of mind, mainly owing to the offence given him by the attitude of the Crown Prince and his none too tactful proclamation. On the same day Frau Cosima received news that greatly delighted her. Her father had joined the committee and taken three *Patronatsscheine* (certificates of membership of the *Patronatverein*), which was a great deal in view of his much reduced circumstances. Both she and Wagner now began to entertain thoughts of a *rapprochement* with her father, which could, however, only be managed in certain definite conditions. It would certainly have to be during his stay in Germany. He was longing for a letter from his daughter, and for this purpose brought influence to bear upon her through both Tausig and Frau von Schleinitz. After thinking it over for a long time, she wrote and told the latter why she did not write to her father and why she wanted to see him at Triebschen alone. In view of her vast love and devotion to her father, this was an unexampled sacrifice for her to make to her love, as well as to the honour of her husband. There could be no question of yielding now. Far too much poison had been instilled into the relations between the two friends, and between father and daughter, by that ill-omened hand in Rome, and this caused Frau Cosima unspeakable suffering. And now, too, came the horrible news from Paris of the burning of the Tuileries, which drew from the Master an absolute cry of pain; while the dangers which threatened her relations and friends from the Commune all agitated her and she found consolation in one thing alone — in music. " Music," she wrote, " is the only element that is of any worth to us, the divine element."

But guests came and went, above all Nietzsche, who appeared with his sister Elisabeth. Then there were, of course, fresh anxieties of a financial nature, about which all that Frau

Cosima has to say is: " I am glad that he tells me all this. Unbounded sympathy is his only consolation." Before he had found the right people to help him at Bayreuth, she was the only one who knew how to bring some sort of order into his affairs; but in spite of all, life had now an upward trend. The news that came from Berlin and Munich was by no means of a depressing character, or at least by no means calculated to cause despair. She heard, too, from Hans von Bülow that he proposed to go to America, which caused her pain, and she wondered anxiously whether she and, above all, the children would ever see him again. All the same, she was assured that he was bestirring himself and was fully conscious of his powers. Next Herr Heine, an old friend of the Master's, wrote to him from Dresden, and he remarked: " ' You don't like my friend. Yet that is the world from which sprang *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*.' I answered with a laugh: ' And it was just the same with the *Nibelungen* and *Tristan*, there is not a particle of difference.' " But, for all that, he fell to talking to her about what had happened in Dresden, and read her his memorandum on the Dresden Court Theatre. He was, in fact, just then engaged in getting together his writings for the edition of his collected works, of which he said to her: " It was then that, before I ever thought of revolution, I was filled with the burning desire to ennoble the world." And she goes on to record: " Richard tells me how, when this work came into the hands of Herr von der Pfordten, he adorned it with marginal comments and wrote, among other things, at the point where the question of increasing ministers' salaries was raised: ' So that was the true inwardness of it (*des Pudels Kern*).' " In this piece of information possibly lies the origin of the mystery surrounding the unspeakable hatred which von der Pfordten showed for his old enemy in Munich, and it may explain why he saw in Wagner's efforts at reorganization nothing but a repetition of his supposedly revolutionary machinations in Dresden.

For the rest, even now there was no lack of disappointments. Wagner and his wife received information from Vienna about the extremely offensive attitude taken up by the Princess Hohenlohe, daughter of the Princess Wittgenstein; and the Master rightly observed that " he regretted every cordial and enthusiastic word he had spoken to so double-faced a creature. ' You alone make life worth living, yes, only you,' he exclaimed, in a tone that only brought bitter tears to my eyes. When will this curse be lifted from him? " But he had already recovered his spirits. Once, on catching sight of her in the distance, he sang to her: " *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* (A firm stronghold is our God)." She was now more and more determined to have her children brought up as Protestants. " It was the Reformation that saved the German spirit," she writes, " and my children are to become true Germans." But then the vision of her father rose before her: " My father! What sort of a meeting can that be? He in his clerical costume, I a Protestant, just so that I may rest in one grave with Richard."

The idea of being united with him in death dominated her thoughts during all these days, filled as they were with a deep joy in his earlier works. He had copied out *The Death of Siegfried* with his own hand for the new edition, setting beside it *Wayland Smith* (*Wieland der Schmied*) too, and she was much struck by this work. And while all this was going on, the question again came up: was he sure that they would not be parted in death? To which he replied with his invincible cheerfulness: " Yes, for no longing remains when we are wholly content. If we were not, we should have to be born again." " I am so happy! " said Richard again. " How easily I could abandon the Art-work of the Future! "

Then came the news of the entry of the troops into Berlin, and the speeches of the Emperor and Bismarck; and, though they were not pleased at the advancement of such men as Julius Rodenberg and Oskar von Redwitz, they shut their eyes to all this and were content to enjoy the general impression of the brilliant victory. " I believe that the Empire will flourish as never before," cried the Master enthusiastically; " and if *The Ring of the Nibelung* coincides with the victories of Germany, this will be no mere coincidence, whether we live to see it or not." And he spoke enthusiastically of the victorious four of Gravelotte: the Emperor, Bismarck, Moltke — " and," she added, " Richard."

And amid all their anxieties they kept their eyes fixed on Bayreuth. " Our Bayreuth business," he said, " will probably give us some trying moments; but whatever happens, it will show the world how we stand. In earlier days, when we had renounced each other, we were thrown back upon great artistic successes; and had, as it were, to make up for the sacrifices we made by great activity. That is why we did not achieve this aim then. And at heart I was glad of it, for I had a presentiment that it would draw us together. The position is different now: if the enterprise does not succeed, we have, at any rate, each other and the art-work too. It would be a disaster if I were forced to surrender the later portions to the King as well. I could not do it." And all their cares centred on this point: whether the King would guarantee the existence of Bayreuth by agreeing to the performance of the whole work there, or whether he would stand upon his rights and insist on the performance of both *Siegfried* and *The Twilight of the Gods* at Munich.

The latter course would naturally put Bayreuth out of the question for the time being, though only for the time being; for it was the completion and performance of *Parsifal* that first really gave it a firm basis. Yet they felt that they stood alone, in spite of all their friends, and they found consolation, not in the present, but in the past. They were already beginning to have doubts about Nietzsche, whose letters were becoming colder and more doctrinaire, though he had no idea of this himself. " In this direction, too," wrote Frau Cosima, " Richard has lavished more love than he has received." He believed in nobody's love but hers and expressed this in the most charming manner apropos of Luther and his attitude towards monastic life. " I regard your marriage to me," he said, " just as though you had withdrawn into a cloister. Your qualities are now all lost to the world. I too withdrew into the cloister, but it was one that I chose myself, that has redeemed me from the world and purified me." And, as chance would have it, just at that time, while he was engaged in collecting his youthful works, he showed her *Das Liebesverbot* (*The Ban on Love*) and asked her whether she thought the libretto could be included in the first volume, for he thought the latter would be too slender; but he decided that the poem was too childish, an error which had to be rectified later.

But now news came which threw into the shade all considerations on the subject of Nietzsche and his friend Overbeck, who had sent Wagner a pamphlet on a religious subject. This was the news of Tausig's illness, of which the Countess Krockow was the first to inform them. He had caught typhus and was seriously ill. Now, it was in his hands that were gathered almost all the threads on which the Bayreuth enterprise depended; and Frau Cosima was consequently seized with a twofold alarm, partly owing to her sympathy with the fate of the unhappy sufferer, and partly to anxiety about the Bayreuth idea; but it is remarkable how the latter was thrown into the background by her interest in this unhappy, broken man, a poor, prematurely worn-out creature, who had no belief in himself. " He threw himself into the cause of Bayreuth with absolute impetuosity," she writes, " but can this practical activity help him? He was too gifted to be weary of life." And so she pondered; but the Master added: " I no longer want to associate with the world; now that I have you, I mean to look to the children's interests and confine myself to this alone. For ghosts rise up to meet one whichever way one turns. The Flying Dutchman is nothing compared to me." " I told him," she continues, " how happy we were in our seclusion, for we should be simply unable to endure life in the world. ' Yes,' replied Richard, ' it was a stroke of genius when I telegraphed to you from here, " *Vor Anker alle sieben Jahr, Hier werde ich mit Dir vereinigt sein* (At anchor every seven years, here shall I be united with thee)." ' "[1]

Then came the news that Tausig was dead. Frau Cosima was deeply grieved. She looked back over all the faithful friends who had departed: Uhlig, Schnorr, Seroff — the very ones who had best understood the Master; and Tausig had proved a remarkable support to the new enterprise. Yet these practical considerations were of but secondary importance to her great, generous nature, and, speaking of the part played by Tausig in connexion with the Bayreuth idea, she remarked: " But that is a matter of indifference to us. Richard said: ' I watch it like a cloud-formation, the mists are rising, but God knows whether they will be dispersed or gather into mighty clouds. I only look on. My life appears a godlike thing to me; even its cares are beautiful now, for they are only on account of the children.' " And his judgment of Tausig was as follows: " A sad life, precociously mature — the influence of Schopenhauer when he was sixteen — the way in which he felt the curse of being a Jew and took no pleasure in his prodigious virtuosity. All the same, your father was the greater of the two, but Tausig was too exceptional to have the sentiments of a disciple. His marriage with a Jewess — dissolved at once. By the age of twenty-nine he was consummately developed (*vollständig fertig*), yet not a man. What must sleepless nights have meant to such a man! What was in his mind," continued Richard, " when the stupidity of fate snatched him away at the very moment when a great sphere of activity bid fair to afford him inward joy and satisfaction? " Such were the thoughts which inspired the wonderful epitaph, breathing the most genuine sorrow, which he caused to be inscribed on the tomb of his faithful friend later:

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[1] *The Flying Dutchman*, II, i.—Tr.

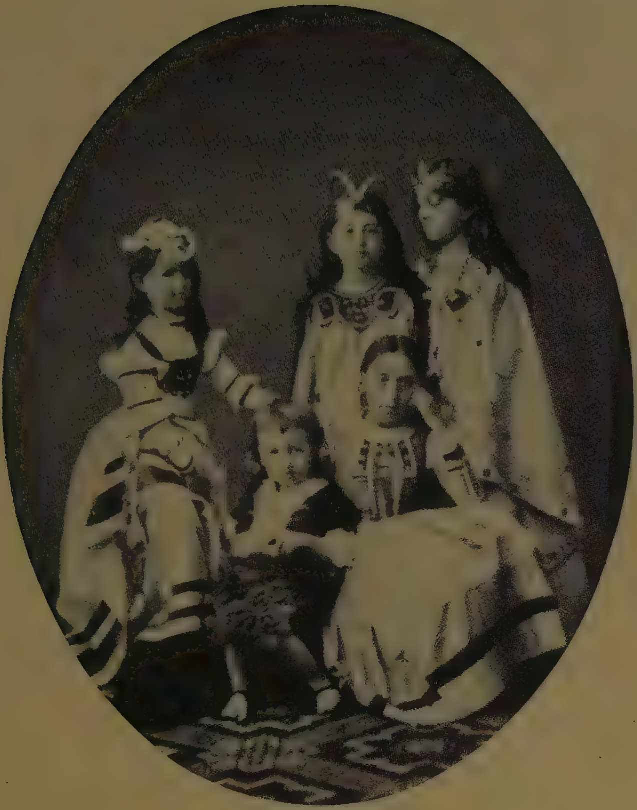
To be thus ripe to die,
Life's fruit that is so long in ripening,
Too early ripe, to lie
Among the headlong flowery flight of spring:
Was it thy lot, or was thy daring great?
We must bewail thy daring and thy fate.

But, all the same, this was a fresh blow of fate. About this time Richard Wagner wrote a letter to Wilhelm Tappert in which he happened to speak about the King. This was not right, and Frau Cosima persuaded him to tear the letter up. What she writes about this is a revelation of her whole personality: " It hurts me," she said, " when the King is mentioned on every possible occasion. Richard repented of having been so violent, and burst into tears about the King, who had known all and sympathized in everything, only to throw him over like this. For his own part, he said, he had always shown himself truthful in all things. He stood there in all simplicity and would carry this one lie only to the grave. And he wept bitterly. I stayed with him and then went to the grave of Koss." For the moment when they received the news of Tausig's death had also been the last hour of this poor beast, which had been Frau Cosima's companion during the darkest days of her life. Hans had brought him to her at Zürich in order that he might be some slight pleasure to her. When she returned to the Master from the little grave, she found him reading *Faust*. He read her the last act, which calmed, pacified, and affected him and cheered them both up, so that she writes: " Every word is a jewel."

She could not but meditate long upon the dog, her faithful companion. " A dog's whole power of expression," she writes, " lies in the eye. How a dog's eyes look at one! No human eye has the power to look like that. Human eyes have that expression of theirs because they have lost their force owing to their habit of judgment (*Gewohnheit des Verstandes*)."

For the rest, the after effect of the loss of Tausig was twofold. The original score of *Tristan* was in his possession and was not easy to recover, though they did so in the end. Hermann Brockhaus had taken charge of Tausig's papers, which had been entrusted to him by the Countess Mouchanoff. This lady herself seems to have completely lost her head in consequence of what had happened, so that even Frau Cosima remarks: " God knows how our cause stands." But the Master remained calm and was quite wrapped up in his wife. We see him stepping out of the door of the upper drawing-room and calling: " Cosima, where are you? " and she replies: " Here I am, writing in my diary." " Are you writing something good? " " Of course, but what do you think of me now? " " Foolish one, what do I ever think of you? Where should I find the endurance for my work save in this thought? I should like to know what would have become of me if I had not found you. I should have been ruined, after committing folly upon folly! I should have pined away in misery! "

These were days of extreme agitation. Anxiety about Bayreuth and the King's assent was increased by worry about the latter's own fate; for Count Bassenheim, who, like many of the Bavarian



THE CHILDREN

as Senta (Daniela), *Elisabeth* (Blandine), *Isolde* (Isolde),
Evchen (Eva), *Siegfried* (Siegfried), *in 1874.*
Photograph by A. v. Gross

nobles, busied himself by spreading the horrible reports about him to which we referred above, had told tales of his rude behaviour to the Crown Prince, and said how the Bavarians laughed at him for having his hunting-boxes gilded and furnished entirely in the style of Louis XIV. The Master was distressed at all these doings, as well as by the consciousness of his own dependence, nor was he less depressed at his relations with Liszt, whom they both loved, though the Master combined this with an intense jealousy of his wife's father; in spite of which, she writes in her diary: " While playing a difficult piece of my father's, he observed that in it something which was bound up with my father's personality had been elevated into a rule — that is, the magic spell exerted by his playing, which was in keeping with the colour of the phases of his varying life. His pupils acquired his prodigious technique, but had to spend an immense time in doing so, which to me, as to Richard, justly seems to be wasted, since they do not possess the individuality in which such a thing originated." And she goes on to relate how, when the second scene of the second act was finished, he observed: " Music is the new religion, we could not commune with each other, so I made music and we understood each other at once. Our life will be heavenly so long as nothing comes from outside."

Such was the characteristic mood in which they both faced the great change which was to come over their lives and his art. But she dwelt in a world of dreams and love which was all her own. She dreamt that they had been parted. Hans had been delighted at this; Richard had wanted to go away; " and I let him go." But then she writes: " Yes, until there is perfect union, love is nothing but suffering, and the most perfect union is only after death — all this finds expression in the whole of *Tristan.* Thus exultation and mourning are combined, and out of grief springs once more the supreme sense of love and existence." And he said in absolute ecstasy: " The word ' eternal ' is a very beautiful one, for it really means holy. A great emotion is eternal, for it frees us from the changes and chances of existence, to which everything succumbs. It has nothing to do with yesterday, today, or tomorrow. When we come to arithmetic, hell begins." "But God knows," she said, "what on earth may attach itself to your fate yet." "Nothing," he said, "for I have believed in nothing save you."

Now came a time of unresting work in the cause of Bayreuth. Letter after letter was sent out, and news poured in from all sides. It was a time of extreme tension, during which, however, Wagner continued to work, though not, of course, with the same calm and decision as before. Thus he struck out the version he had written of Hagen's summons to the wedding, saying that it was over-elaborated and that this was all due to the external conditions of their life. He felt like Michael Kohlhaas in Kleist's wonderful story. "I am weighed down with heavy thoughts," he said, "I can never be cheerful and well. The disgrace of being dependent on the King is outrageous and not to be borne. If only he could be set aside a little, one would be able to justify both oneself and him." There can be no question that in defending the ideal of his life he became unjust, and that it was this feeling that caused him the greatest suffering. "I curse this music," he said, "which paralyses me so that it will not let me enjoy my happiness at all. My own son was beside me here just now, and he passed me by like a dream. This Nibelung composition ought to have been finished long ago. Either it is a piece of madness, or else I ought to have been born as wild as Beethoven. It is not true that this is my element, as you people imagine. My impulse was to live for my own culture, to enjoy my happiness. In earlier days it was a different matter. Alas, I feel as though I were trying to build a house on the blossom of a catalpa-tree, I ought first to fill the world with soft breezes which should cut me and my work off from mankind. Idylls, quartets, that is what I should still like to write — and now comes this agitation for the performance of *The Ring*."

Meanwhile Frau Cosima undertook to translate those of the Master's essays which had been published in French, with a view to their inclusion in the first volume of the collected works, which calmed her and, to some extent, him too. He regarded this work in much the same way as he did the trouble she took over the education of the children, which moved him to say: "How happy I shall yet be through our children! You will see!"

— It is curious how their relations with Nietzsche began to alter under the influence of these things. His coming always gave them great joy, and his departure a slight feeling of melancholy; and they agreed that he was certainly the most gifted of the Master's young friends, yet in many respects very unsatisfactory, owing to the unnatural reserve of his demeanour, as though he were trying to resist the overwhelming impression of Wagner's personality. Besides, he was an alien element; whereas the Master's life was, in fact, wrapped up in her, his tenderness being not only touching but also in the fullest sense of the word poetical, so that she was able to write: " Richard gazed at my fingers, saying: ' They have ceased to be fingers, they are sensitive filaments (*Empfindungsstaubfäden*). They might even have wings, like little butterflies. After all, your father is a good man — but I possess the cleverest thing he ever made." She greeted such words as these with an outburst of joy, only to lapse at once into a fresh mood of depression. " This will not do," she writes, " it is a feeling of overweening pride that fills me: happiness is as brittle as glass! " But they both enjoyed working together at the Master's youthful works, Wagner in particular, " for he likes literary work," she writes, " he says it is so easy, though actual genius has, of course, nothing to do with it. It was the artistic instinct of the Italians, he maintains, that was the cause of their writing so little."

Next the fourteenth anniversary of her marriage to Hans von Bülow came round, upon which she writes: " I am filled with grave thoughts, God grant me strength and courage, and by His aid I shall attain peace." Her great love and the life of intense introspection which found expression in the grief which she felt for her supposed guilt — just as Wagner's inner life was expressed in his works — thrust all practical matters and, above all, the great idea of his life — Bayreuth — notably into the background. Indeed, it required some strong outward inducement to make her take a closer interest in these matters. And now Frau von Schleinitz appeared in Lucerne with the Baron von Loën, Intendant of the Court Theatre at Weimar. The little committee met and discussed the whole state of affairs. Karl Bechstein, to whom the Master had offered Tausig's position in the *Patronatverein* (Patrons' Association), had declined, probably on account of his friendship for Bülow; but he sent a portrait of Tausig, and during these days Frau Cosima also received the obituary notice of him written by Hans von Bülow, which, as a matter of fact, affected her painfully, for it gave a different impression of her father's pupil from that which she had herself formed, while in the way it was written she recognized many traits of Bülow's that had saddened her in days gone by. This divergence in their judgment of and attitude towards a man who was so closely connected with them both through her father, as well as through his friendship with Wagner, is in the highest degree characteristic and is, indeed, essential to an appreciation of the intellectual relations between Hans and Cosima.

The meetings of the committee now began, at which Herr von Loën officially took over the functions formerly discharged by Tausig. The Princess Hatzfeldt had also appeared with Frau von Schleinitz. The questions relating to Bayreuth were dealt with clearly and decidedly and with a certain optimism. The Master, indeed, looked chiefly to his young wife, and it was from her that he drew the answers which he gave to the kind Countess. " When other women come here," she writes, " Richard always says such dear, sweet things that I might easily become arrogant and proud, if this exceeding goodness did not make me feel the deepest humility." It is this fact that gives these sessions a charm all their own. We see the immeasurable superiority of the artist nature of Richard Wagner, who had created the tremendous work which was now to be presented to the world by the aid of comparatively small resources. For him all this was but a secondary consideration, of small importance, serious though matters were and heavily though they weighed upon him and his wife in the present and were destined to do in the future. With such feelings as these they celebrated their wedding-day cheerfully and gaily, and she rejoiced that he was able to play her Hagen's summons to the wedding, in which she heard nothing but the joyous note, not the dæmonic tragedy that developed out of it. For the rest, the cause of Bayreuth seemed to promise better than they had hoped, and the sums which were now announced at Triebschen sounded large and ample, though these reports afterwards proved to have been dictated by the optimism that prevailed at the committee meetings. It is astonishing how incessantly Wagner worked. Once he passed his hand over his brow and said: " My mind is itching with ideas (*Die Gedanken jucken mich*)." And when she came into his room on the next morning, he played her the beautiful choral scene "*Der Hagedorn sticht nun nicht mehr* (The hedge's thorn pricks now no more)." [1]

Amidst all this he was already thinking out his speech for the laying of the foundation-stone at Bayreuth, which he intended to issue later as an appeal to other circles than the friends whom he had made hitherto; for a large number of these were beginning to drop off; though not — and this should be emphasized — those who had attached themselves to the cause as friends of Frau Cosima and had thus in a sense been won over by her, but the Master's former circle, and first and foremost Frau Mathilde Wesendonck. Had she not written from Munich about the performances there, without so much as mentioning the word Bayreuth? The Master was indignant at this and told Frau Cosima on no account to answer her letter, lamenting that all his life long had been spent among miserable beings. As for Frau Mathilde, " she knew all about it," he said. " Our whole intercourse centred upon the performance of the *Nibelungen*! And now to ignore everything! The worst of it is that one cannot obliterate one's experiences; one may perhaps banish them from the heart, but they remain part of one's life." " The very mention of the performances in Munich," writes Frau Cosima, " is like a dagger-thrust in his heart, and yet he must go on working. How is he ever to finish it? His distress makes me despair. He has a foreboding that all his friends will drop off again and nobody will think of him. But he said: ' I am waiting for a miracle. It will come, you will see — how and when I do not know, but come it will.' I told him that I too believed it. For me the miracle is that he goes on working." These magnificent words became, as it were, the motto of the whole subsequent development; for amid the vast muddle which arose out of the

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[1] *Twilight of the Gods*, II, iii. — Tr.

Bayreuth undertaking and formed a most serious menace to their house and home, and to the very family itself, the leading motive was always this wonderful appeal to Wagner's inborn power. She understood him as no one else did, and knew, too, like no other how to restore his equilibrium time after time. Yet she never failed in tact in dealing with the outside world and, above all, with Frau Mathilde, and no harsh words from Triebschen reached Wagner's whilom friend; but it was a satisfaction to Frau Cosima to be able to explain to her in a few words what these much vaunted performances in Munich meant to the Master. On the other hand, he said in speaking of Frau Mathilde that when he was young, it had caused him the most terrible misery to bid farewell to anyone for ever! On which she comments sadly and resignedly: " I can understand it. Once I said farewell, a farewell that cost me my grey hairs, and it was then that the hour of true understanding really struck for me. Till then I had only vaguely divined the meaning of all I had read in the poets about the crime and terror of existence. When I gave Hans my hand in parting, I realized everything in my own person, and the veil of illusion was rent for ever. From that time onward life and death were intelligible to me, but since then, too, I have never desired anything again."

Meanwhile the Master had determined to lay the foundation-stone of his theatre in Bayreuth as early as October, which naturally caused Frau von Schleinitz the utmost alarm, and she warned him in urgent terms against this excessive haste. But he was not to be turned aside from the idea and threw overboard any who were not ready to go with him. " I expect nothing more from that quarter," he said. " I shall turn to others. It must be made clear that I am in earnest " — upon which she comments: " It is terrible to me to speak a word of discouragement. No understanding is possible between him and the world. It is nothing but a battle in which he either can conquer or must succumb." For the rest, new patrons were announced daily, and a whole number of fresh collaborators were, as a matter of fact, found among the friends of Frau von Schleinitz and did good and excellent work. The circle was extending, and their friend in Berlin took up the task of recruiting supporters with especial zeal; for such was her way — to warn them when she found cause for doubt, but to help when it came to action. She was one of the truest, most resolute, and most tactful women who ever came into touch with Bayreuth.

Next came round September 27, Frau Cosima's name-day, and she remarked with a smile: " Richard would not take any notice of St. Cosmas. My father sent me his good wishes, and Richard said: ' He is a Catholic, it is that which separates us,' at which we laughed." Yet he had offered his tribute to the day, and a peerless one — the funeral music on the death of Siegfried, which he himself characterized when he called out to her in the morning: " I have composed a great chorus — but," he added, " a chorus which is, as it were, sung by the orchestra after Siegfried's death during the change of scene. Siegmund's theme is sounded, as though the chorus were saying: ' That was his father '; then comes the sword motive and finally his own theme; then the curtain rises and Gutrune enters, thinking she has heard the sound of his horn. How could words ever produce the impression which these themes produce when thus metamorphosed? Yet all the while the music expresses the immediate present." This was being written while Frau Mathilde's daughter Myrrha was becoming engaged and *The Rhinegold* and *The Valkyrie* were being performed in Munich. It was at this time that he sent Frau von Schleinitz the pianoforte arrangement of *Siegfried* with the following verses:

> If genius be the name ye give
> The force that makes the true art-work to live,
> Love and troth I name the grace
> That pays it for men's gracelessness.

It was a delight to him to send this, and in doing so he said to his wife: " We are indeed a happy couple. When a storm is raging outside, I think of how our storms are over, because you love me. But, all the same, the world is not the best of things, for if you did not love me, it simply would not exist for me. You are the fulfilment of all that the world has even so much as promised me."

Yet she lived in perpetual anxiety about his work, though he said to her: " If music is not intended to inspire our whole world with new life, it is not worth much! " And upon this there came into being the marvellously dæmonic passage of the unhappy Brünhilde's oath: " *Helle Wehr, heilige Waffe* (Shining spear, hallowed weapon)," [1] Cosima's comment being that it makes her shudder to think he might suddenly grow weary of creating this work; but he comforted her by saying: " Now that I have got as far as this, I shall surely finish it yet."

On October 10 he himself reminded her of their first meeting in Paris. " I gave a reading of *The Twilight of the Gods,* which I am only now completing. Without you this twilight would never have fallen." Yet however much they might be wrapped up in each other, to the exclusion of everything else, these last months at Triebschen were a period of preparation for the world outside, in both a narrower and a wider sense. We read how Frau Luise von Bülow, Hans von Bülow's noble stepmother, asked to see the children and received them at Egisheim, where they were a compensation to her for the grievous and terrible losses which the war had inflicted on her maternal heart. And now, too, the bonds uniting them with Émile Ollivier were drawn closer, since Frau Cosima could not but take that interest in her sister Blandine's son which her heart now prompted. Her correspondence with her mother was only interrupted by another serious illness of the Countess's. Better relations had also been established with her father by the correspondence which had now started between them. As a matter of fact, the Master's frame of mind was a greater obstacle to a reconciliation than that of her father, of whom Wagner said: " He has been the type (*Illustration*) of a dying world. Gypsy melodies, for instance, which can make no claim to be a lasting form of art, have gained fresh life through him. The centre of this kind of thing was Paris, but that has now disappeared." But Frau Cosima was full of inward jubilation, for she felt that, after all, her father still felt the old affection for her, though it could not yet find expression, owing to existing circumstances and the pressure exerted upon him from Rome. For, when all was said and done, she could not imagine Bayreuth coming into existence without a reconciliation with Franz Liszt, her father and the friend of her beloved husband.

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[1] *Twilight of the Gods,* II, iv.—Tr.

She now developed an extraordinary activity in every sphere, which was in remarkable contrast with the home life to which the diary bears such wonderful witness; and almost everything now passed through her hands. Her correspondence with the Countess Schleinitz had always been beautiful and touching and now became doubly important. The Countess was at once the mediator between her and her father, and her confidante in all questions relating to Hans von Bülow; for it is touching to see how Cosima clung to her memories and how every day of the year marked some crisis in her existence. Thus on October 19 she writes: " Fifteen years ago took place the performance of the *Tannhäuser* Overture and my betrothal to Hans. Today I have made up my mind to approach him directly about the conversion of the children." On the same day, as it were in memory of the preparation of the piano-score, she wrote about the orchestral score of *Tristan*, which a so-called Kapellmeister named Bratfisch had claimed as his own; and she did, in fact, succeed after a lengthy correspondence in recovering this precious treasure. In this matter her friend the Countess Schleinitz had once more to help her, and on October 11 she wrote to her as follows: " I have lost both sight and sound of you, dear, which is too much at a time, and I have masses of things to say to you! . . . I presume that you have received *Siegfried*, the Great, with the dedication and the Lucerne binding. Loën and Kafka are now here, both very sanguine. Would you be so endlessly good as to remind Davidsohn to send Loën the drawings which are among Tausig's effects? I have written to Davidsohn about this, but he has not yet done it. And would it be possible, through Davidsohn and Bechstein, to establish a Wagner Society (*Wagnerverein*) similar to that in Vienna? I have just been in correspondence with Aloys and Seraphine Tausig, both of whom suspect that the manuscript of *Tristan* is in the hands of Herr Bratfisch, director of music at Stralsund, who *took* it. I have written and telegraphed to Bratfisch, but had no answer. Could you recommend me a lawyer in whose hands I might place this business? I should prefer a Prussian. Wagner is still intent on the laying of the foundation-stone and therefore wants everything that is in readiness to go to Loën. We read in the papers that the ' Wagnerians ' had taken refuge in an Opera Company, which is all there is to be said. But Tausig is dead, and the good Loën does not get on very far with the idea. On September 27, my name-day, I received a letter from my father, which I at once answered. Now you are *au courant* with our affairs, both public and private, so I will not write any more now, for I am in the greatest straits. I have had to dismiss my nurse and have now so much to do that I am literally absorbed in it. Good-bye, dear, and let us not allow ' Out of sight, out of mind ' to be true of us." Next came her father's birthday, and she could think of no other way of celebrating it than by sending the children to church. But Wagner talked to her about Frederick the Great and said that Luther, Gustavus Adolphus, and Frederick the Great were the men who had helped the Germans, and now Bismarck as well. " The plague of this nation are the Habsburgs," he said, " and I still hope to see them driven out. For this reason Bismarck's instinct was right, always in opposition to Austria, and it is to be hoped that the French war was only an interlude in the process of destroying this shameful (*schändlich*) house. Frederick, too, was instinctively opposed to Austria in everything." It is remarkable how justly he appraised affairs and foresaw their trend in a way that was veritably prophetic.

And all these ideas came to him while he was finishing the pencil-sketch of the second act, which moved Cosima deeply: " Thanks and blessing be to all, all the gods and good spirits," she writes. " The happiness of having listened to Richard irradiates everything." And he said: " How happy you would be if you were now to hear that nothing can come of Bayreuth, and that we must spend a quiet winter! "

And the winter was, in fact, destined to go by before the first sod was turned in Bayreuth, though everything was seen through the medium of the great new idea. Thus on November 7 she wrote to her friend Frau von Schleinitz: " I am not answering your dear letter today, my kind friend (*Gütige*), only sending you a few items of news: Yesterday Wagner wrote the architect Neumann in Berlin an important letter with a great deal in it, addressed to him from Bayreuth by Herr Feustel (the banker) and Herr von Gross, and requested him to return it at once. It now occurs to me that the contents of this letter may interest you, and that you might perhaps get Herr Neumann to give it to you, which is why I tell you this. Thanks for your news. If only one could give Loën the order '*pour le mérite*'! I have heard direct from Bülow that he is undertaking two years of concert tours, but I am convinced that he will cry off. Perhaps it is a good thing that they made him the offer. Have you seen his great, stupendous edition of Beethoven? Richter would be the best. If he cannot, then Klindworth. But I think Richter will be able to do it. My father is leaving Rome on the 10th and will then migrate to Pest. Our visit to Vienna will perhaps take place in the middle of December. At the end of November Wagner goes to Munich and Bayreuth to inspect the site. . . . The air at Triebschen often feels quite sultry, what with *The Twilight of the Gods*, bloodthirstiness, Bavarian affairs, the hubbub of the children, etc. But one is always happy through it all."

Meanwhile the report of the architect, Herr Neumann, had made it clear that the laying of the foundation-stone could not take place at the beginning of the winter, because work would have to be broken off immediately afterwards. He had suggested the month of March, 1872, and it was decided to inform the public that this date had been fixed. Frau Cosima again informed her friend Frau von Schleinitz of this in a letter in which personal matters concerning her own feelings also found further expression: "So, now that my triple bill (*Dreizigeunerprogramm*) in the shape of business affairs has been gone through, I can chatter to my heart's and fancy's content. Today is my father's birthday. I have sent the girls to church, Fidi is sacrificing to Morpheus, the best of all the gods, and I have already celebrated divine service after my own fashion, by gazing long and mournfully at nature as it grows numb with cold. The leaves still defend themselves as best they may, but one feels that the battle is lost and the struggle in vain. I saw a whole swarm of beautiful Admiral butterflies settle on a tree, yearning towards a ray of sunshine with the whole of their will to live, then at last recover their strength and flutter away. But for how brief a time! Beneath the tree the earth sent forth a smell of violets, and all around was bright, but it is a brief, lingering vision, and just as the golden rays herald the setting sun, so the yellow sheen that lies over it all warns us that all will soon be over, that Siegfried, the sun-god, is no longer victorious, and that the gloomy Hel now prevails. Soon all that delights us will be gone. So one seeks one's quiet hearth (*stillen Herd*), and the cosy lamplight comes into its own; another manner of life begins. Abandoned by nature, one seeks a haven of refuge in the human intellect, and during the long winter evenings good books exert their power. These reflections about the quiet hearth remind me that my father writes to say that he has made a paraphrase of Walther's song for you. This has given me no ordinary pleasure, for you have a claim on all our hearths, whether quiet or not. The least quiet will certainly be Bayreuth, and in this connexion I beg you to keep only the letters of your former correspondent Dr. Kafka, for they have been answered and we do not require them. — You need not tell me, dear, that you have done all this, for I am surprised that in your position you have still been able to make so much time for our affairs, and I cannot tell you how this touches us. I have just received a letter from Karl von Gersdorff, who cannot praise your kindness and amiability too highly. A pæan came from Weitzmann too yesterday, and before long a whole litany in your honour will have taken shape. If I were to undertake to point out the special quality of your gifts, as compared with those of the most talented women in the world, I should describe it as the capacity for going deeply into things, whereas most intellectual women are misled by their very gifts into a dissipation of their energies. But as you have not called upon me to expound my views about you, I beg you to excuse this, and will only add Wagner's most heart-felt thanks for your letter, and the best of good wishes from Triebschen's quiet hearth."

Her exchange of ideas with Marie von Schleinitz was indeed the greatest joy to her. Thus she writes again on November 21: "I should like to start my greetings with a quarrel, dear friend, for I am really cross with you. You will be quite surprised at this, will you not, for your conscience is perfectly clear, and you are conscious of living for us and our affairs. This is precisely what I find fault with you for! There is nothing in your letters but Bayreuth, Loën, certificates (*Scheine*), and other such castles in the air which have still to be realized. It is as though you thought that nothing else appeals to us. Never a word about your feelings, your occupations, whether it be the music you are making or the book you are reading — never a word about your well-being. If Chamfort is right in saying that he broke with two friends because one of them always talked about himself, and the other one never, I am bound to say that our friendship is in great danger. . . . But things will not come to such a pass, and now, like the first of these friends, I will begin to talk of ourselves again, leaving it to you to decide whether you will continue to practise the self-abnegation of the second, which wounds me.

" The second act of *The Twilight of the Gods* is now finished, and in about a week's time my husband is going to Munich and Bayreuth, where I am not accompanying him, as I do not like leaving the children for any length of time in winter. But as he would not set foot in Vienna unless I accompanied him, I have promised to meet him there if this journey takes place, for which he does not feel in the least inclined. It depends on the *Wagnerverein* (Wagner Society), and if this shows great results, then our visit will probably take place between December 15 and 20. What I know of Bülow comes directly from himself. He expressed a decided preference for remaining in Florence, but the minds of men are unstable, and so it is possible that, if the offer has really been made, he will end by accepting it. Have you read his reminiscences of Auber and his letter to an Italian friend? Both may be said to be very important. The one marks a falling off, the other gives one hope. *Lohengrin* is really becoming quite naturalized in Italy; the whole company from Bologna are to give three performances under him in Florence, and it is expected that Garin le Loherain will make a landing in almost all the cities of Italy and take the persecuted Wagnerians under his brilliant protection. But the fact that Eckert's chief has struck

Wagner's works out of the bill in Berlin is painful to us at Triebschen — very much so, to wit, in a material sense. Heckel is now issuing an appeal from Mannheim to all the Wagner societies in order to bring into existence an organization which shall extend its activities far beyond the *Ring of the Nibelung*. There we have a Wagnerian of whom it may be said that 'the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,' and one cannot take exception to this. Marie Mouchanoff's visit here gave us great pleasure. Everything seemed easy and beautiful when talked over with her, and that is why I have learnt to value this rare, grandiose, and charming nature so thoroughly. Her character possesses a quite exceptional magic of mingled expansiveness and reticence, the effect of which is absolutely beautiful. Brünhilde now lies fast asleep, for the cold rays of sunshine which break through the clouds now and again are like the distant call of Siegfried's horn, the snow's protecting shield rests on the sleeping earth, and here this season is too sublime, though for the world it is the signal for gaieties. In after years our thoughts will often return to the winter silence here; the snow-clad mountains tower into the sky, and it is as though nothing worldly could force an entrance here. We have now started on Plato's *Republic* in the evenings, while in another connexion the proofs of *Die Wibelungen*[1] have made us familiar with Frederick Barbarossa and Henry the Lion. Professor Nietzsche's book, which is dedicated to Wagner, will appear about Christmas; I consider it the most important success that our cause has achieved. Have you read Herrig on Wagner and Schopenhauer? It was a little too much, and it would sometimes be better if the good Germans were to keep silence. But everybody wants to have his say at once, and there are only too few who quietly implant the germ within themselves and allow it to ripen until it cannot but flower. The flowering comes very rapidly with young people. . . .

"Baden-Baden has made an offer to Wagner to put up his theatre there, and Darmstadt is ready to do the same. Apropos of this, could not Davidsohn write to Damrosch in New York and suggest that he might found a Wagner Society there? D. is now editor of a newspaper there."

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[1] By Wagner (1848).—Tr.

The idea about Mannheim was actually realized, and the Master started out on his journey to Munich and Bayreuth, from whence he wrote to his wife to meet him in Mannheim, of which Frau Cosima gives a full account to Frau von Schleinitz: " Wagner was very well satisfied with his visits to Munich and Bayreuth," she writes. " The site that has been presented is wonderful, and the burgomaster, the town councillors, and the President of the province vied with each other in friendliness and goodwill. Mannheim was very fine in words, but not in its behaviour, for the rehearsals upset Wagner very much, and I hardly think he will conduct a concert there again. But in Herr Heckel and the other members of the Wagner Society we have made the acquaintance of really energetic people, ready to make sacrifices, and rarely have I heard such beautiful words as those spoken by a certain Dr. Zeroni at the banquet given to Wagner. The Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess were present at the concert and conversed for a long time with Wagner, but I do not know whether this will bear much fruit. . . .

" So the laying of the foundation-stone at Bayreuth is to be on May 22 next; will you be able to be there, dear?? From that time onward we remain in Bayreuth, and Triebschen will be a thing of the past, a beautiful dream. God grant a like blessing on our settlement in Franconia. . . .

" The A major Symphony in Mannheim was heavenly, the last movement like an exultant delirium of non-existence (*Nichtsein-Taumel*), casting down all walls with cries of triumph, a Bacchantic deliverance from earthly existence. The worst of it is that after such impressions one feels an unspeakably melancholy longing for them and almost feels as if one had not enjoyed them to the full. . . . In Mannheim we won over a Jewish man, Kapellmeister Levi from Karlsruhe, by no means an insignificant person."

This meeting with the Grand Duke was, however, marked by a curious incident. Wagner could not refrain from telling him that, if *The Ring of the Nibelung* was finished, he had to thank the King of Bavaria for it, at which the Grand Duke is said to have turned red in the face.

Wagner and Frau Cosima returned to Triebschen well content with their tour and enjoyed the short time that was still left them there. On their mother's birthday the children came to her bedside early in the morning, wreathed it with flowers, and greeted her with the following hymn:

Hail to our mother,
Hail to our mamma,
Her children's wealth and leader in good ways,
Best of all women, glorious is thy praise,
The gain of love
Thy joy shall prove,
And lovely as a perfect rose
A realm of sweetness round thee grows.
Hail to thy Siegfried!
To our Fidi,
To thy son,
To our brother,
Guide in life we need no other,
World's defiance,
Thy reliance,
To thy sisters shalt thou be
Comfort and security.

And so the old year drew to its close, and her final summing-up in her diary is: "Surveyed our year and found it good." As belated birthday presents she received Lenbach's portraits of the Master and her father, which gave her the utmost delight, and she rejoiced still more at the fact that Richard pulled himself together and started on the third act of *The Twilight of the Gods*. "This makes me boundlessly happy, and even puts me in high spirits," she writes. There was, however, a slight jar between them, of which she writes with much humour: "Whoever will not hear must feel, whoever has a cold must sweat. But Richard begs for forgiveness. I forgive him anything!!! He says that it would be better if we did not love each other so much, for then he would not torment me. We talked for a long time recently about loving and being in love. He said that the latter happened oftener than the former, which was a bad thing, but that without the latter it was but a play of the imagination and had no strength." And she continues, with reference to the children: " You are my sunshine, whoever is as happy as I am can dare to face life and take up the challenge of the world, he does not look melancholy nor hang his head. But the worst of it is that I do not want to die. Lenbach's picture pleases me more and more, though I know one could give quite a different impression of Richard; for instance, as I saw him at the station at Mannheim, beaming, transfigured, and with so sweet an expression that his features seemed small and delicate. Here everything is sharp, resolute, and inflexible."

Meanwhile Nietzsche had sent his book, which made the Master very happy. " He said that next to me come Nietzsche and Lenbach, who painted his portrait. But what would his life have been like, he said, had he died ten years ago? 'My memory would have remained in the chaos of the worlds.' He calls me his priestess of Apollo and Dionysos element. Only, he said, we had concluded an alliance. But he has begun his third act."

Thus she, too, was full of joy, which she expressed in a letter to Frau von Schleinitz. " You know, dear friend," she writes, " why I have not written to you for so long; we have once more lived through a stormy episode, and now we are peaceful, happy Triebscheners again. On Monday Wagner arrived in good health and the best of weather; he had so much to tell me that I had to interrupt him and beg him to spread what he had to say over several days, so that we might not forget the happiness of our meeting in discussing the affairs of the world, about which I am still not very curious. We spent the first day merrily amid the prattle and laughter of the children. But next day everything was told in due order: the loss of his illusions about Löser (*die Erlösung von dem Löserschen Wahn*),[1] some useful drawings, the audience of the Grand Duke of Weimar, who said some very important things and was actively friendly

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[1] See Glasenapp: *Das Leben Richard Wagners*, IV, 393. Herr Kommerzienrat Bernhard Löser, who had been introduced to Frau von Schleinitz by Tausig, had founded a society and obtained promises of considerable subscriptions, on the understanding that the performances should take place in Berlin.—Tr.

— 15 *Patronatsscheine* (certificates of membership of the Patrons' Association) — then his visit to his family in Leipzig, the preparations for the Ninth Symphony at Bayreuth, the inauguration of Feustel's regime, the purchase of our plot of ground, the ball at President Lerchenfeld's. Then his Thursday in Munich: Marie Mouchanoff, Klara Liechtenstein, the Usedoms, and Lenbach. I say nothing about the most agreeable thing of all, his being received once more at the Ministry of the Royal House (*Hausministerium*). Ah! my friend, after all it is a great piece of good fortune that we now know nothing is to be expected from a certain quarter. Wagner implores you to let all those people go their way and to confine your friendly propaganda to your own circle alone; if it remains fruitless, do not take it too much to heart. It will all come about in its little German way, but do not make a sacrifice of yourself, for it is no use. At heart what all these people want is to have the entrée to the Ministry of the Royal House, everything else is as indifferent to them as an eclipse of the moon is to me. Poor Tausig was *metaphysically* ruined by his connexion with the family from which he had sprung. His inward unrest, his instability, were due to the consciousness of his origin, as I wrote to Elisabeth Krockow long ago. . . . I implore you, dear, to let those people go their way, it was Tausig who got us into this position, and it is fortunate that we at last know it to be nothing but a delusion. . . .

"I have not yet thanked you for your friendly sympathy. The sister for whom we are in mourning was Richard's elder sister Luise, an admirable woman, whom we visited last summer and whose death was due to the loss of her son-in-law and grandson (General von Weltzin and his son) in the war. By a beautiful coincidence it happened that, as she lay in her death-agony, the military band played the Overture to *Tannhäuser*, so that her 'flight through night and horror'[1] to the heights beyond was guided by the beating wings of her brother's genius."

We see how clearly and firmly they both grasped things. Her confidence in the King was also somewhat shaken, but, in spite of all, they managed to place their relations with him on a right footing and to content themselves for the time being with the fact that the King subscribed for twenty-five thousand thalers' worth of *Patronatsscheine.* But, all the same, the laying of the foundation-stone was of peculiar importance, and for this reason Frau Cosima had from the first had the idea that this act ought to be made glorious by a musical festival. When the Master laid his plans for this before her, she wrote in her diary: " I could dance for joy that I had had this idea and yet shrank from mentioning it to him, for fear of causing Richard fresh agitation — as though I had told him that the celebration of the laying of the foundation-stone would not be enough for me. I have begged for the Ninth Symphony. Richard means to issue a notice to the newspapers that he intends to perform the ' Ninth ' at Bayreuth. 300 singers and 100 orchestral players are to be invited. With his wonderful cheerfulness he said: ' The dog has scarcely had his beating when off he goes pilfering again.' " Meanwhile he had been revising the final scene of *The Twilight of the Gods.* " I begged him," she writes, " to leave out *Wunschheim* and *Wahnheim* (home of desire and home of illusion), which sound a little artificial." So it was undoubtedly thanks to Frau Cosima that Richard Wagner made the close of *The Twilight of the Gods* so short and terse, in contrast with the two earlier versions.

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[1] *Tannhäuser*, III, ii. — Tr.

The preparations for Bayreuth were already being made. She designed the dress which she was to wear at the laying of the foundation-stone, and he thought out the speech which he was to deliver. He referred to Luther's rules: " *Frisch auf, tu's Maul auf, hör' bald auf* (Look alive, speak up, stop soon)." Thus she vacillated between joy, hope, and anxiety. But it was hope that filled her with absolute enthusiasm, and in this spirit she wrote to her friend Marie on March 10: " I have just dismissed my flock so as to have a little leisure to thank you, my dear; for the lovely gherkins have really arrived, they are excellent, and I must plead guilty to having deprived Wagner of the enjoyment of some of them. In earlier days I had my own tastes, but tastes and views have vanished, and just as I would assuredly follow Wagner to the moon if he wanted to go there, so now I eat gherkins with him and rob him of his share. However that may be, we both thank you heartily and think sweet thoughts at every salt mouthful. I am today sending you an Italian review in which there is what I consider an excellent letter, written by our friend and patron Schuré. The editor of the review is a professor of Sanscrit and is worthy of all honour for having opened a Wagner subscription list in his paper." She expressed a wish that Weitzmann would have a translation of the article published in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, and then goes on to say: " We will take no more notice of the Löser delusion. You know that when Kant had had an unpleasant experience, he wrote in his note-book: ' To be forgotten,' and so we must train our memories to forget. On the whole it is always a good thing to see clearly, if it is not always pleasant. We know well, dearest and best, that it was only for the sake of the cause that you tolerated these people, and that is why we may be allowed to ask you to cease this forbearance; and now be of good cheer, every success so far has been your work, and if we cannot take by storm the sluggish world, with its law of inertia, yet give the German time and he will grow, and our foundation-stone shall yet be a very thick one. . . .

" Wagner has received a very nice, fine letter from London saying that at its first evening meeting the *Wagnerverein* there at once took up six *Patronatsscheine* and that they expect good developments. The Viennese have collected 20,000 gulden and are counting on still more flourishing results. We shall be there for a concert on May 12. Pest has sent 1,000 gulden to Bayreuth, the proceeds of a concert, and formed a society. Now I am negotiating with Chicago and Boston. You see, dear and arch-patroness, that things are going on in their little German way! " And she puts in a word charmingly for her friend at Basel: " I am delighted that Nietzsche enthralled you! It would be very nice if you would send our friend a few lines giving your impression of his book, for he presented it to you quite on his own initiative and without being prompted to do so by us. Also it seems only just that those who sympathize with him should assure him of their recognition, for, as was to be expected, he gets very little satisfaction in academic quarters (*seitens der Schule*). My father has read the book twice and has written delightedly to tell him so, and Marie Mouchanoff too. Do you know, by the way, where the latter is? She seems at present to be absorbed by her Varsovian avatar (*Warschauer Seelenwanderung*), during which silence prevails.

"You are indeed right, beloved friend, in saying that the more one has to do with Wagner, the more conscious one becomes of his greatness. His is a vocation such, perhaps, as that of no other, but God grant that there be no cause to raise over his age the lamentation that is raised over Götz's death. But he has many sincere friends, every day brings proof of this, and if only he can succeed, like Faust, in acquiring a sphere which no one else desires and then build dikes to cut it off, leaving the rest of the world to spread itself out according to its needs, this alone will mean that much has been gained. For the good and the beautiful can only find a refuge here below, and not domination. Happy is he to whom even a place of refuge is vouchsafed. Accept our greetings, protectress and patroness, who are helping us to build up such a place." And she adds: "I must also tell you that an architect in Berlin [Cörper] has written a very beautiful letter in which he announces the foundation of a German Theatre Society (*Theaterverein*), the object of which is to collect funds that will be placed unreservedly at Wagner's disposal." And again: "Today Siegfried is being killed in pencil, and Fidi laughs the while."

There can be no question that the progress of the composition, as well as of the *Patronatverein*, had the happiest effect on Frau Cosima. At the same time it is evident that it was from Triebschen that the firm refusal to bring Prince Bismarck into the business went forth; for, as Wagner explicitly said: "He is doing enough, he has no need to think of the art-work of the future." This shows how well he understood Bismarck, at the very time when there was much talk of his fall and when attacks upon him were multiplying daily. But the most gratifying advances came to them from Bayreuth. The Dean sent his pax vobis, and Wagner rejoiced more and more at having chosen this little town of the margraves and in cheerful moods would say to Frau Cosima: "You will be margravine of Bayreuth." And, comparing it with other towns, he said: "We have no really great cities; it is only as though they were masquerading as great cities, as, for instance, in Berlin."

And now musicians and singers kept announcing their intention of arriving from every quarter, and the Karlsruhe orchestra announced that it would take part in full force. It was absolutely certain, then, that the performance would take place. Yet in contradistinction to this public life, there was their even more beautiful intellectual life, which developed in their daily exchange of ideas and their reading together. When conversation turned upon a motive from *The Valkyrie* which had taken shape in Zürich, he said that "the impressions of life are to creative work very much like the box on the ears which in earlier ages was given to the youngest member of the community when the boundary-stone was set up"—thus showing in the clearest possible way how little any external impression counted in connexion with his art-work, or even any spiritual intercourse that he had with other people.

Meanwhile the state of feeling at the court of Munich, not to speak of that of the King, was causing the Master great anxiety; for on February 25 the King caused it to be intimated to Wagner: in the first place, that it had been brought to his notice that the theatrical enterprise would cost far more than three hundred thousand thalers, and that the numerous visitors were causing great expense; in the second place, that the Bayreuth papers were talking of the luxury of the Wagner establishment, which was very displeasing to the King; and in the third place, that he had a right to the score of *Siegfried*, which he had acquired by purchase. "I begged Richard," writes Frau Cosima, "to restore the house to the King at once; that is, to cancel the purchase of the site. He said, however, that the score of *Siegfried* was not yet finished, and that he knew the source of all these allegations, of which he had heard nothing. So we are plunged back into the old misery. I had a long discussion with Richard, he will demand an explanation from the Bayreuthers; and if this prove unsatisfactory, we will give up our whole project. For we cannot hold out if the King himself turns against us. Besides, Richard would probably have to give up his allowance, and we are wondering how we shall manage." And, as always in such situations, the Master preserved his old resolute spirit. Early on the morning of the following day he came to Frau Cosima, and she gives an account of what followed: "He is thinking of giving it all up," she writes, "of making a contract with Schott, disposing of the copyright of the *Nibelungen* for a large sum, and going off with me to Italy. 'This proud Bayreuth edifice was based upon my personal independence,' he said, 'and this basis has been destroyed.'" The strange thing was, however, that as recently as January 3 the King had actually encouraged him in his plans. The fact that obstacles had now been put in his way could therefore only have been due to hostile influences, above all to that of the narrow-minded coterie of officials. We must, indeed, quote the King's letter in order to contrast it with the absolutely brutal language of the secretariate of the Royal Household. The King wrote on January 3:

"My dear Friend, dear beyond all things:

"Good luck for the new year. It will be one of the most glorious of years, since, all aglow with rapture, we are permitted to see with our spiritual eyes the completion, so long desired with all the force of our soul, of the great Nibelungen work, blest foretaste of the actual sight of this divinely begotten work. I have a great debt of gratitude to you upon my conscience. It is very modest of you to keep on saying that you have so much to thank me for, since the reverse is the case and in an immeasurable degree. How am I to stammer out my thanks to you for your most affectionate, inestimably precious letters and glorious birthday and name-day present [the second act of *The Twilight of the Gods*], which made me breathe the bliss of heaven and forget the cares of earth? Oh, may you indeed now settle and make your home permanently in my country and never lend a willing ear to foreign offers! '*Habe Ruhe hier gefunden, hier ruh' Dein Schiff in sicherm Port* (Here mayst thou have come to rest, here rest thy ship in harbour safe).'[1] It is impossible that my enthusiasm for you and your divine works should ever flag. Should you still give way to any such doubt of your most faithful friend and adherent, indeed he does not deserve that you should cloud his spirits by the least shadow of such a suspicion. How greatly I rejoiced, my much loved friend, and how genuinely I was affected at the thought that in the depths of your soul you so rightly appreciated the enduring quality of my enthusiasm, in spite of doubts, which were happily but evanescent! To understand one another as perfectly as you and I have done is only possible for the unerring eagle glance of such a deep-rooted love and friendship as has always united us, and will continue to unite us to all eternity, till far beyond this world. In spite of all the storms that seem to part us, and the cloud-masses that press between us, our stars will yet come together, and, even if the great eye of the Many is incapable of discerning their bright radiance through its veil of simplicity, yet we shall recognize each other and reach at last the sacred goal marked out for us from the beginning, the central sun of the eternal Godhead, the Giver of life, by whom all things are touched with fire, for which we suffered and battled unafraid, rendering an account of our deeds, whose aim and tenor were to proclaim your light upon earth and by your holy flame to purify and perfect mankind that they might become sharers in eternal bliss. Yes, you have realized what is the fundamental cause of all my sufferings for our ideal! You know that I would shrink from no sacrifice, however painful and great, should the real well-being of the nation demand it; but, on the other hand, I feel justified in my own mind in remaining in my own sphere, and not feeling bound to let myself be dragged down into the vortex of the workaday world, which is repugnant to me, even though I have to take thought for it; but abiding like you, my adored friend, in the poetic world of exaltation, in which I am monarch of my ideal and loneliness, recking nothing of the slavering serpents' tongues. I can say with Schiller in the *Jungfrau* (*The Maid of Orléans*): 'Oh, this is why I am not lonely, because in the wilderness I learnt to know myself!' Do not deplore this, but be assured that it is precisely because in my inmost thoughts I never made any concessions to the empty world, but kept guard over the sanctuary of an ideal view of things, that I have perhaps indirectly made the great Nibelung work possible for you. Do not take this for mere boasting. The pure fire of inspiration cannot be fed if the priest is too much occupied with the affairs of this world, one cannot serve at once God and Mammon, and that is what is involved here. I am happy! I cannot understand why you are finding the fulfilment of this your desire so difficult. Inwardly I am happy, but I am put out of humour by political conditions, by intercourse with people who cannot be avoided, by contact with the affairs of this world. How can I feel unhappy when I know all the time that the Easter sun will shine on the completion of your great work, which is above all things dear to me? This work for which I have longed from childhood upwards and never wearied in my longing! It would be a desecration of our friendship if you were to think of me as otherwise than supremely happy. No, you know me, and that makes me proud; you have not such a low opinion of me. A blessing on you and your family. I share all your sufferings in my deepest soul, ye noble ones, and shall be rapt with you in glowing and celestial ecstasy when the great goal shall have been attained. '*Nicht Haus noch Hof, noch herrischer Prunk, selig in Leiden und Lust lässt die Liebe nur sein* (Not house nor home nor lordly pomp, blessing in weal and woe love alone can bring).' "[1]

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[1] *The Flying Dutchman*, II, iii.—Tr.

Here was the old exaggeration, to which, so far as house and home and lordly pomp were concerned, Councillor Düfflipp now managed to give quite a peculiar interpretation. Richard Wagner now received such splendid letters from Feustel and the burgomaster of Bayreuth that he decided to venture on the great step. On March 9 the pencil-sketch of the third act was finished, so that nothing now stood in the way of the journey. Preparations were made, and gradually the Master accustomed himself to the idea of leaving Triebschen. Frau Cosima found the parting unspeakably hard, but she bowed to her " lord's " great idea and made up her mind to follow him on May 1. On April 22 the Master bade farewell to cosy Triebschen and to his family. No feeling of joy or hope inspired either of them. As lately as April 18 Frau Cosima had written in her diary: " Whither are we going? What awaits us, where will be our home? " But his view of the matter was: "Since I have you, the worst can no longer befall me, this is not another parting, we are but preparing to meet again." And so the last evenings passed away in a touching fashion, in melancholy, beautiful, and sweet communion. He played her the duet from *Lohengrin*. He was determined to keep himself as much to himself as possible in Bayreuth too. "To consort only with this and that great mind, and with the great figures of history who have forced history to follow a new course, such as Frederick the Great, the great German Emperor, and Luther. I note that German history alone can point to such characters, with the exception of Cromwell." On the evening of the 19th they went on reading *Hamlet* and also talked about Goethe and Schiller, Wagner expressing his regret that neither of them had written a play about Frederick the Great whose life at Rheinsberg up to his father's death, and the great final conflict between them, provided, he said, a pendant to *Hamlet*. She, on the other hand, doubted whether so recent a period could be made a subject for artistic treatment. To which he replied that Kleist had had the stuff of which such things are made.

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[1] *Twilight of the Gods,* III, iii.—Tr.

Then came the parting. He travelled by way of Munich and Darmstadt, where he had a conference with Brandt, and was soon able to send gratifying news from the Fantaisie. For her part, Frau Cosima spent her time setting papers in order and making arrangements for the packing up of the furniture. Among the papers she came across Wagner's letters to his first wife, which agitated her greatly. Then Nietzsche came to bid farewell. He found her surrounded by cases and boxes, which were already packed. Only the grand piano was still left, and she begged him to play her something while she worked. He did this in so striking a way, and wove into his improvisations such wonderful musical ideas, lacking nothing but coherence, that she was astonished. Nietzsche, too, was deeply moved by the parting, and in his autobiography he speaks with melancholy regret of the time that he spent at Triebschen. He reckoned his many visits there among the fairest hours of his life, which could never be effaced.

And now it was time for Frau Cosima herself to bid farewell to Triebschen, which was very hard for her, as she made clear in a letter to her friend Marie von Schleinitz: "I cannot tell you anything in particular about our feelings, dearest," she wrote. "Wagner is very much upset and that affects the nerve-centre of my own life too. The giving up of our idyllic existence is harder to endure than some may suppose, and I am bearing the burden of these fleeting days with a feeling that words cannot express — Heaven forfend that it should be a presentiment. Ultimately it is not well to have staked all on a single thing, to live only in one's heart; for the outer world, which gives one nothing, steps in and takes its share. Forgive my melancholy, beloved; when I sought refuge here I did not believe that I should ever have to exist for anything but Wagner and the children, and that in the utmost seclusion. The change — not in the task, but in the conditions under which it must be fulfilled — hits me harder than I could have imagined, and so my words are as sad as my thoughts. Understand me like the friend that you are, and let us talk no more about it, all things must be fulfilled in the predestined way."

And so they were. Frau Cosima had no cause to regret this parting, and destiny guided her into a great and momentous path. She started out on her journey with the five children and the big dog Russ and at Augsburg insisted on herself taking the faithful dog to the water to have a drink. People whispered and gaped, and the rumour went round that this was the wife of the Master of Bayreuth. They arrived at Bayreuth on Tuesday, and the Master at once took them to the Fantaisie, the situation of which was as idyllic as that of Triebschen, and where they were to take up their residence during the immediate future. On the very next morning the Master, to her delight, took her into the solitary park of the ducal palace, after which he made her acquainted with his friends. Feustel in particular she found incomparable, and she described her new home as "a new world of dreams and enchantment," just like Triebschen. She arrived in the thick of the preparations for the laying of the foundation-stone and the performance of the Ninth Symphony. The Master was in the best of spirits; and, though he was annoyed and occasionally filled with real anxiety by the fact that the musicians from Munich and Karlsruhe had resigned at the instance of the intendants of their respective opera-houses, the preparations went on successfully. The training of the chorus had been undertaken at Leipzig by Karl Riedel, who was almost too zealous in the cause; for in his excess of zeal he would have liked to add the chorus from *The Mastersingers* to the program to be performed at the laying of the foundation-stone. Excitement followed excitement, and on top of it all came the journey to Vienna for the promised concert!

We will not repeat what has so often been described, nor will we describe the enthusiastic reception of the Master in Vienna, but will only point out how, during the general rehearsal, the famous actress Josefine Gallmeyer sat in the corner with tears in her eyes. The Countess Rossi might declare that Wagner's art was the only one which united hostile elements, and the Countess Krockow refer to Frau Cosima as the Master's royal consort; these hours which they spent in Vienna were indeed great and momentous, and, above all, it was a wondrous company that gathered in the evening in the director's box, from which Frau Cosima was able to watch every movement of her husband's face. During the *Feuerzauber* a violent thunder-storm broke out, which the Master turned to account in the speech which he was compelled to make by an outburst of applause which seemed as though it would never end — saying that the Greeks would have regarded the storm as a good omen, and that they would do the same.

They now went straight back to Bayreuth for the last rehearsals before the laying of the foundation-stone. Friends arrived from every quarter, and the great day dawned, about which she writes in her diary: " He is himself preparing the great festival in celebration of his birthday." Indeed, though he may have experienced more joyous and touching birthdays, none was so momentous in the history of the world as this one on which he laid the foundation-stone of the theatre. It was pouring with rain, but he made the three raps with deep emotion. And now followed the performance of the *Kaisermarsch* and the Ninth Symphony in the old Opera-house. " It was absolutely glorious," writes Frau Cosima. " Everything was instinct with a feeling of

COSIMA WAGNER
About 1875

deliverance from the burden of the reality of existence, and then at the end Richard's sublime words."

He had written to Liszt and invited him in the most cordial terms to the celebration, but Liszt's chivalrous nature led him to believe that, as a sacrifice to the Princess, he must stay away from the laying of the foundation-stone at Bayreuth. He entrusted his reply to the Baroness Meyendorff, and Frau Cosima writes that her father's letter was very beautiful, but that the lady was unfortunately very disagreeable. And so the one person of all others who ought to have been at Bayreuth was absent, being represented by a lady who, as it were, laid claim to ambassadorial rights for herself and still further delayed the process of reconciliation by her reports of supposed slights.

The great impression made by this celebration has found an echo in all the accounts of it. Our sole concern here is with the great and holy emotions of Frau Cosima, when at the performance the Master led her and the children from their box on to the stage, where he assigned them a place, as though intending to convey the impression that without her he would never have attained to his present position. Indeed, when Wagner tapped on the stone and caused his own wonderful and poetical words and the King's cordial telegram to be placed in the foundation-stone and built in, he was inspired above all by the great idea of her who was his helpmeet and the guardian spirit of his life. May 22 was more than a celebration of the Master's birthday and more than the day on which the foundation-stone was laid: it was conceived by the Master as an act of homage to her who had accompanied and guided him. For him, in fact, she was part and parcel of the German mind and the German nature, about which he uttered such imperishable words on that occasion.

And so the foundation-stone was laid, and the great era of Bayreuth now opened.

CHAPTER VII

HOUSE AND HOME

THE DAYS of festivity connected with the laying of the foundation-stone were over. Only a few faithful friends remained behind, among them Malwida von Meysenbug and Baron Gersdorff. The chief thing to be done now was to settle into the home of which they had only just gained possession. At first the family and Frau Cosima enjoyed the idyllic existence at the Fantaisie with all their hearts, if only to soften the pain of their home-sickness for Triebschen. Their social circle in Bayreuth was ready and waiting for them from the beginning and included the Feustel and Muncker families, the two consistorial councillors, and the Thursday Club (*Donnerstagkränzchen*), though they naturally made a beginning with their "official" calls. Bayreuth was glad to have the Master, and he and his family quite soon felt at home there. It is true that this was not made precisely easy for them by certain officials, and especially by their wives. These estimable ladies could not resist the temptation to focus their eye-glasses upon Frau Wagner and her family constantly wherever they appeared, even in the hotel, but, after all, this was characteristic of a German provincial town and had to be endured. It was perhaps the most comical side of the odd republic of officialdom which had long since developed in this loyal state and has maintained itself there from the days of His Worship the *Landrichter* down to Republican times. It was not surprising, then, if once, in the garden of the palace, Baron Gersdorff heard a man richly decorated with orders say in that full chest-voice which denotes a conviction of one's own importance: "If Wagner makes too much of a disturbance for us here, we shall take our measures." But Frau Wagner was not in the least disturbed by this sort of thing. She knew exactly upon whom she could rely, and how to make her knowledge of human nature, her politeness and charm of manner, effective everywhere — but also her justifiable pride.

And how could she have failed to win people's hearts here in Bayreuth? Already, on his birthday, the Master had consented to stand godfather to the child of a working-man, and he kept his promise in the most beautiful and touching way, warmly supported by Frau Cosima. She was delighted when the family called for her and Wagner, took them to the church, and then drove them back to the workman's clean but humble home, where the family were deeply moved by the way in which the "new Bayreuthers" interpreted and carried out their duty as god-parents. But Frau Cosima was determined to establish herself in Bayreuth on quite a different footing; she resolved from the first to become a Protestant.

Her most singular experience, and one that wounded her deeply, was a controversy with Bülow. At the festival in the Opera-house in connexion with the laying of the foundation-stone, she and her children had been conducted by the Master to the "seats of honour" on the stage; whereupon Bülow overwhelmed her with the bitterest reproaches for having compromised his daughters so seriously. This action was doubtless due to irritability caused by other annoyances and had not the slightest immediate occasion. On the contrary, this was perhaps the greatest and most signal favour that Richard Wagner could have conferred upon his stepdaughters at the time; for to have excluded them from the ceremony, at which the Master's own children were present, would have been an unkindness which nothing — not even their father's wish — could have justified.

But for her the strains of the Ninth Symphony rose above all these discords. During the time that immediately followed, this symphony provided her with food for deep meditation and formed the subject of exhaustive conversations with her husband. She asked the Master how Beethoven had arrived at the idea of the poem. He believed that Beethoven had actually felt the Hymn to Joy as an expression of freemasonry; but she declared that it seemed to her that he had written the gloomy movements first, and then, having failed to find any joy, had turned to these words. " But such a work," she added, " remains for ever a mystery." What Wagner felt was rather the strongly dynamic and musical quality of the work, and he observed how remarkable is Beethoven's avoidance of trivialities; but the public, he said, being incapable of concentration, was not fit to understand this music.

But it was most of all through nature that she adapted herself to the new surroundings. The walks in the Salamandertal, the aspect of the smiling fields, the people in their traditional costumes — for instance, the peasants from the Hummelgau — everything delighted her, and especially the children singing folk-songs. She would have been best pleased to hear no tidings of the outer world, for pleasant news there was none; the odious dispute with Weissheimer, which the latter had just provoked and in connexion with which Wagner allowed himself to be drawn into publishing a reply, caused her misgivings. She had had doubts about this reply from the first, yet could not make up her mind to advise him against it, so she blamed herself for not having done so: " I am too easily persuaded, and so I fail to be of service to him, for the very reason that I am always loath to cause him any unpleasantness." There is something very characteristic in her immense humility towards the Master, which brings out the childlike element in her. It was this feeling which caused her special pain since Franz Liszt had failed to come to the laying of the foundation-stone. The Master was undoubtedly becoming more and more prejudiced against his father-in-law at this time, and the Baroness Meyendorff's attitude was probably the main cause of this. But there was a further reason: the Master had just gone through Liszt's *Christus* with Cosima, and her entry on the subject in her diary quite reflects Wagner's views: " What I know of this work so far does not make a very beautiful impression upon me. To strip oneself of the attainments of a lofty art in order to imitate the mouthings of priests (*Pfaffengeplärre*) seems to me to argue poverty of intellect. We are sad at this development of my father's, for which the Princess Wittgenstein is of course primarily responsible." From this time onward it may be said that the name of Liszt began to acquire a doubly tragic significance for Frau Cosima; for, next to the Master and her children, she undoubtedly clung to him like a child, with her whole soul, and so it was terrible for her to be forced to witness and combat this constant dissension. If it is possible to use the word " tragic " about anything in the relations between her and Wagner, it is in connexion with the Master's violent revulsion against the friend to whom his whole heart had gone out. Yet his kindliness was always coming to the fore, and he was capable of displaying such patience as is hardly to be expected of a genius.

But he possessed this kindly feeling in a high degree, as he proved most of all in his relations with the Thursday Club at Bayreuth, which he attended in the most touching way, saying that it took him back to the life in which he had his origin. " These people and this house! Surrounded by these children! Among these homely citizens, whose outlook may be narrow, if you will, but who are full of warmth and heart! I could imagine Uncle Adolf here." Then he reverts to his own life: " Yes, it is only when one grows older that one can understand one's life. When I think of the force which urged me to sketch out the plan of *Tristan*, just when you and Hans paid your first visit to Zürich, whereas up to that time I had been quietly completing two acts of *Siegfried;* and when I survey the whole sequence of events up to the performance of *Tristan* at Munich, one can see how everything is psychical (*metaphysisch*) and how deceptive is all that falls under the category of the conscious. How different it would appear to one who could survey the whole as though it were revealed in a moment! There was the germ of an immense passion within me, as in Romeo, but my conscious mind took it for a feeling of tenderness towards ' Rosalinde.' What is consciousness? The day which follows a bad night, and ghosts that walk by day (*Tagesgespenster*)! [1] And it really seems as though one must comfort oneself with the thought that, after all, fate is taking care of one. My whole life, that marriage with Minna, did it not all seem desperate? And the miracle happened, in another and more painful way, it is true, than through the Annunciation and that sort of thing, and I know that, however agreeable the sympathetic acquaintance may have been of her who was willing and able to look after me, I was always on the point of breaking away."

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[1] See *Tristan and Isolde*, Act II.—Tr.

Through the whole of this time, in fact, runs a continuous criticism and judgment of the Zürich days on the part of the Master, which — from the purely psychological point of view — is not without humour on close consideration, but unquestionably forms part of the repertory of his ideas. Day after day he now played her the *Christus*, and every day his condemnation of the work brought her fresh pain, for it revealed a positively childish jealousy in the Master — though by quite a different process, but also from a purely musical point of view, Hans von Bülow had arrived at similar conclusions about the work and condemned it. Thus the days which she spent here were by no means cheerful, and, for the time being, there could be no question of any fresh burst of enthusiasm for their great future plan. The same thought must often have occurred to both of them: was it necessary to undertake this fresh conflict in the face of a world such as had been revealed to them by Liszt on the one hand and Nietzsche on the other? When Nietzsche sent them Wilamowitz's pamphlet,[1] the Master himself declared that he was quite unable to see any necessity for going on making music. The condition of the world was hopeless; the professors, who turned out specialists like themselves, had no humane culture which was capable of spreading. It never occurred to a jurist to study philosophy and philology! There was nothing but specialization! — All this was only too true; yet Wagner rightly felt that in this respect it was art alone that could provide a remedy for the world.

In such hours as these Frau Cosima would take refuge in the park of the Fantaisie. "Everything is blooming and fragrant, and then there is the fir-wood. How easily one forgets then in what an evil world we live!" "I am writing on the balcony, while Richard is writing his article. Blackbirds, orioles, and thrushes are twittering and singing. I hope that Richard will get to work; for then I am happy — happier, perhaps, than any other being, and I thank God in humility, penitence, and joy." "I am up and about between three and four o'clock: sunrise and the song of birds, a little deer runs past me quite close by, the cuckoo is calling; a lovely mood!" And then she found another great consolation: when she went to the site of the new theatre and watched the builders hard at work, she remarked about the building: "I have a curious feeling about it. I never think of it, and when I see the people working, it seems to me quite natural. And if it were never to come into being, I should feel as though something different and greater would come instead"; and she rejoiced at the progress of the work. But the whole thing had something ghostly about it in her eyes, and the same thing was true of Wagner when he was working at his biography. When, for instance, he was correcting that part of it which dealt with Zürich, and so went back over the period when *Tristan* had been taking shape, he felt more than ever the strangeness of the situation in those days and felt it just as he had expressed it to his wife.

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[1] Glasenapp, V, 15. An attack on *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, by Dr. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf. — Tr.

The life that he was now leading was, indeed, like that of a country gentleman; but everything centred upon Bayreuth and the theatre, whereas she was more intent on something else: that is, that he should resume his work. He had himself planned to make a fresh start on the composition of *The Twilight of the Gods* on his son's birthday, June 6, and as a matter of fact he soon got back into the right mood; but for this, complete seclusion from the world was essential, and so she writes: "We no longer read any newspapers, and we try to see as few people as possible except those connected with our work. What was the result, for instance, of Richard's well-meaning invitation to my father? — a veritable inferno." For her own part, however, she became more and more absorbed in the spirit of Protestantism. She went to church, listened to the chorales with emotion, and joined in the singing, about which she writes: "It is from such community that the spirit of devotion springs. For it is prayer of which one is sensible in the lives of the poor, and what the service of song meant to me was prayer, too. As we sang 'We have a God who is our aid,' I could not but think of the days when, with these words on their lips, the Protestants gave up life and limb for their faith. I thought of Luther and his titanic battles; and the bare church, the standing congregation, and the prayerful singing filled me with awe of God. How glad I am to be in touch with the world in this way! How well it makes me understand their feelings and their faces! But the sermon was awful." The Master felt the same, and said: " How I should like to be a clergyman among the peasants, and how differently I should speak to them! "

A growing introspection can now be felt in her. Thus she writes: " Never has the singing of birds moved me so deeply as it does now. It is as though I heard it and understood it otherwise than before, like a strange summons. I reflected how every work of art should speak to us like the song of birds: impalpable, beyond our power to answer, yet at the same time understood and silently responded to. For me art has become almost distasteful, since for its sake one is brought so much into contact with people, and not with good people. But nothing can spoil the song of birds, the shade of trees, or the blooming of flowers for me, and I feel myself thoroughly akin to the poor people who cultivate this land laboriously, by the sweat of their brow. The heart shrinks from human society (*wird menschenscheu*). Such is the result of living among men." Yet these were but moments in a life of unceasing stir.

It is interesting that just at this time the Master and his wife were reading together Gregor Samaroff's novel *For Crown and Sceptre* (*Um Szepter und Kronen*). The book is now long since forgotten; but both of them instinctively grasped the element of living and actual experience reflected in these remarkable romances. They were, indeed, personally acquainted with some of the figures here recalled to life, and had to admit, for instance, that the life and activities of such a personality as that of Liszt's friend Councillor Klindworth were accurately delineated. The figure of Bismarck, too, was clearly recognizable, and it was the treatment of this great character that made a special impression upon them, of which she writes: " It gives me such peace when I see such things as this disclosed. For then I think how Bismarck himself must know it all far better. It was Röckl's weakness that always gave it out that he was the only person who knew anything." This illustrates the need which she felt to live in her age and be of it and to neglect none of its manifestations.

And now arrived another great moment: the completion of *The Twilight of the Gods*, about which she writes on July 22: "Strength fails me to describe the emotion which overcame me when Richard called me to him to tell me that the sketch was finished. He played me the conclusion, and I do not know whether it was the sublime music or the sublime achievement that overwhelmed me more. I feel that my goal has been attained and now I am free to close my eyes. I am describing what I feel to Marie Mouchanoff, for she has shown herself a true and loving friend to Richard." But she wrote about it to Frau von Schleinitz as well: " On the 22nd inst. Wagner finished the composition of *The Twilight of the Gods*, and, just as the poet once held his work high above the waves of the raging sea, so amid our shipwreck this work has raised me high above the surging billows of life. I look upon its conclusion — for which I have lived and suffered — as the highest favour which God has vouchsafed to me and as the attainment of the goal towards which all my life has tended."

But even now she took quite a different view of the practical problem. Though she continued, for instance, to work with Wagner at his biography, while at the same time she made bandages, on account of trouble with her eyes, and though every afternoon she regularly attended the rehearsals with the tenor Diener, who had been selected for Siegfried, she none the less says: " Alas! Everything has to be begun from the very beginning, and my Daniela knows more about myths and the art of the future than do most of our musicians. The abyss upon which our theatre is being erected (I am led to this apropos of the abysmal ignorance of our musicians) seems to be absolutely unfathomable. They are digging at it as though Prince Pückler's idea of making a hole through the earth were being carried out. The rock looks quite volcanic, red and green, and every time I visit the spot I am overcome by a most mysterious and fantastic mood. It suddenly dawned upon me recently that nobody ever understands anyone else save through love or ecstasy. Everything that is imparted by the conventional methods of speech and logic remains uncomprehended. And it is not till our achievement has enraptured people and carried them off their feet that it will be understood. And that is why it is so laborious to canvass for it. You see, my dear, I have constructed a great sentence in your honour. I do not know how far Nietzsche's idea has progressed. My advice was to conduct the matter secretly and only to approach those people whom one knows for certain to be willing to do something for the cause. I do not like the Akademische Verein (Academic Association) at all, but if one were to look about for the people one liked, one would end by excluding even oneself. But thus much Wagner has decided: to have no direct contact with people."

It was, in fact, the Countess Marie von Schleinitz who did most for the cause all along and introduced the largest number of members into the *Patronatverein.* On the other hand, all attempts to produce effects with small means were bound to fail in a Germany which was both simple-minded and poor; for in any other country it may be possible to arouse enthusiasm among the masses for a work of art, but in Germany it was impossible and always will be. And so it is truly portentous that, amid all these straits and cares, the Master found strength to finish the composition of *The Twilight of the Gods* and then to complete the instrumentation. The merit of this undoubtedly belongs above all to Cosima. He called her his Pythian priestess, who delivered to him the oracles of the gods, and even said: " God knows that if all goes well here, it will not be long before I start on *Parsifal.*" With the completion of *The Ring,* indeed, came happy moods and happy days; and she writes: " Amid my blissful meditations upon the completion of *The Twilight of the Gods* I read Goethe's dedication and the two prologues [to *Faust*]. When I told Richard how enraptured I was with them, he said: ' Yes, the art-work of the future is directly connected with the " Prologue in the Theatre," the whole thing is stated there.' " Then he led her to her seat and said: " In the morning the priestess of Apollo, in the evening Sappho."

At this time they had again set to work on the biography and had reached the third volume, containing all the painful scenes with Minna at Zürich and the unpleasantnesses in Paris; upon which he said to her: " This waste of life and vital force, this meaninglessness of all one's relations, makes me verily believe that I have a mission: to live. In Paris, for instance, nothing came of it all for me; I gained nothing by it. Life became harder and harder. Today I corrected the part dealing with the time when I wrote the third act of *Tristan*; and I thought: if only the Grand Duke of Baden had provided me with a refuge at that time! However, I was destined for something different, and everything had to come to me by other than simple ways: you are my element, my atmosphere, in you and the children alone do I live." And he went on: " The only pleasure I have in my work is to sing you over the sketch when I have written it. But there is an end of it. For one's incapacity for making oneself understood in speech still remains. Language is a convention. Only self-sacrificing love and those who are carried away by art can understand others. Your father and the Princess Wittgenstein understood me as little as quite stupid people do."

And now came another thing: Dean Dittmar had recovered from his illness and now called at the Fantaisie, upon which she writes: " He made the question of my change of religion much easier for me, telling me that he had read much in my eyes at first sight and was willing to take the honour and peace of my house under his care. It was with deep emotion that we parted from the man whom, when scarcely won, we had almost lost again, and whom now, when we have once more made him ours, we shall be able to enjoy only for a short time." For the time being, this was what most occupied her spiritually.

But now came her visit to her father. A lively correspondence had been kept up with the Baroness Meyendorff since her appearance at the laying of the foundation-stone, but on the whole this led to no results, and there can be no doubt whatever that it had been started by the Baroness with the object of still further estranging Cosima from her father.

On the other hand, besides the little Countess Dönhoff, the active principle working towards a reconciliation was represented in the first place by Marie Mouchanoff, who, on visiting

Frau Cosima, once more reverted to this subject. She earnestly advised them to propose a visit to Liszt. Frau Cosima, however, objected to that: " Since my father has kept silence since Frau von Meyendorff's visit, I do not consider this feasible, and, for the time being, Richard is not in favour of it either." Yet it was to come to a happy issue after all; for in the end Richard inquired of Liszt whether a visit from them would be acceptable. The answer was long in coming, and Frau Cosima was depressed and anxious to the last degree. Then at last, on the afternoon of September 1, a beautiful letter arrived from her father. They decided to start at once and entered the train at eleven o'clock, amid the fluttering of the " flags of Sedan." It was a beautiful journey through Franconia and Thuringia. Moreover, they found Liszt in good health, and on that same evening they spent a beautiful time together at the Englische Hof. Next morning they visited him in his apartments in the pretty Hofgärtnerei. They dined together and then called on the Baroness Meyendorff. This lady played the part of an affectionate friend to Liszt, and though she was loyal to the Princess Wittgenstein, and even to a certain extent acted as a spy for her, she was as jealous of her as of Liszt's daughter. All this was due to a deep and pardonable feeling of affection, for which reason even Frau Cosima viewed it with indulgence. The supreme moment of the second evening was when Liszt played them Isolde's death-scene (*Liebestod*). Yet the impression which he made upon his daughter was a profoundly melancholy one: " I am terribly struck by my father's spiritual languor, by the way in which he scarcely said a word all the evening, while I talked to him about all manner of things. Richard conversed with Baron Loën, in order to keep up a cheerful atmosphere, and while he was chattering about his alleged popularity, the whole tragedy of my father's life dawned upon me like a vision. I could not help crying a great deal during the night." But she was deeply touched when, early next morning, her father sent her some roses from the Hofgärtnerei. She sent a note to ask if he had slept well, but her feelings about him remained so melancholy that when Frau von Meyendorff, in returning her call, asked her what she thought of his health, she could not help bursting into a flood of tears, which startled the Baroness. Then there was another meeting with Liszt, and this time a gloriously cheerful mood prevailed. They were at the house of their good old friend Alwine Frommann, where Liszt now played the Andante from Beethoven's great Concerto, a prelude of Chopin's, and, at her request, his own *Mephistowalzer*. "He recalled many memories of the old times when we bought fruit together in the market at Berlin, and the old feeling that we belong to each other made itself felt." This was perhaps the crowning moment of their meeting. The Master was in good spirits too. He chaffed Gille, who had hurried there from Jena, by asking him if he was related to Gil with the green breeches, whereupon the unhappy wretch cast a hasty glance at his trousers, which made them all laugh heartily. "Laughter," reports Frau Cosima, "which I increased by my naïveté in saying to my father that the Spanish piece was really a very proper one, and that it was the wife who really wore the breeches."

But the following morning revealed the complete change that had taken place in Liszt's frame of mind, which she describes as follows: "My father came about eleven o'clock. From the very first moment I noticed that his mood had altered. He had had to suffer for showing his deep affection for me yesterday. We went to his house, in order to play some of *The Twilight of the Gods*, but the music would not go. He went up to Baron Loën and was silent and low-spirited. Frau von Meyendorff quiet, but contented. And this atmosphere continued to prevail." When they next met, at Fräulein Frommann's, "he did indeed play the Adagio, op. 106. At table he scarcely looked at me, spoke only to Frau von Meyendorff, and nothing more was said of the plan that he should travel with us as far as Eisenach." They left next morning. Her father breakfasted with them and accompanied them to the station: "A quiet leave-taking. I depart in sorrow. It is not the parting that pains me, but the fear lest we may be entirely cut off from him."

On the return journey the feelings which the Master had restrained now burst forth: "In his jealous ill temper he broke out against my father. But I soon succeeded in appeasing him." It was enough; the Princess Wittgenstein had achieved what she desired, in part at least; for up to the death of Franz Liszt, and in spite of her Christian principles, her insurmountable antipathy for Frau Cosima continued — a feeling which she displayed from time to time in bitter and almost unkind ways, even towards the children, and notably Daniela.

Nothing could be more characteristic than the contrast between the letter which Liszt wrote to the Princess about the meeting in Weimar, and his daughter's report to the Countess Schleinitz. He writes: " Last Sunday I received a letter from Wagner, in which he asked whether a visit from him to me at Weimar would be acceptable to me. This inquiry had in no way been suggested by me. Since my reply to his invitation to the Bayreuth festival on May 22, I have not written another word, either to Wagner or to my daughter. This being so, I could not say him nay. That would have been contrary to my nature, between which and my conscience I never draw any distinction. So I replied that from me he would always meet with something more worthy of him than a friendly reception. On the evening of the following day Cosima and Wagner arrived here, having travelled straight from Bayreuth, where they returned on Friday, the day before yesterday. I shall go there, on my way to Sexart, and spend two or three days with them, probably about September 27, the Feast of St. Cosmas, which is my daughter's name-day. So far as my daughter is concerned, I remember your admirable care for my three children, and I bless you for all that you did for them during those long, troubled, and painful years. Cosima is really '*ma terrible fille*,' as I once called her, an extraordinary woman, of great merit, who rises superior to all ordinary standards of judgment and is certainly worthy of the feeling of admiration which she inspires in all who know her, beginning with her first husband, Bülow. She devoted herself whole-heartedly and with enthusiasm to Wagner, as Senta did to the 'Flying Dutchman' — and she will be his salvation. For she gives him all her attention and hangs upon him like one in a trance (*in ihrer hellseherischen Weise*)."

How very different was the way in which Cosima wrote to her friend: " Your dear letter was handed to me just as I was getting into the carriage to go to Weimar. Wagner had proposed to my father that we should pay him a visit, and as he bade us welcome, we started at once. Your letter, dear and precious one, was a friendly companion and a happy omen. We arrived at Weimar amid the bonfires and illuminations in honour of Sedan and spent three days there, during which I sought in vain for a moment in which I might send you a line. Madame de Meyendorff did her best, she kissed me on my arrival and departure, all unfortunate incidents (*alles Missgeschick*) were piled like an avalanche on the back of Baron Loën and his clumsiness, and 'peace reigned in Warsaw.' But her eyes glittered when I left, and I saw quite well that my intercourse with my father would never be quite without obstacles from that quarter. All her little tricks and manœuvres, however, should be treated with indulgence, for I believe that her mind and heart are noble, but tortured, and on this account restless and unsatisfied. Since she is very intimate with my father, I hope to be on good terms with her. Wagner was in an effervescent mood, and she took some trouble to be agreeable to him. But we did not manage to make music seriously, and the subject of *Parsifal* was avoided; Wagner would have been so glad to tell my father about it, but he could not at the same time tell those who were so alien to him. Wagner's first task when we reached home was his epitaph on poor Tausig, which I enclose. I find it deeply moving in its brevity, it sums up our poor friend's fate. I can imagine the impression that *Tristan* made upon you, for while I was coming to know this work, I lived absolutely in a trance, and it was with a heavy heart that I returned to the workaday world! Love and death enjoyed as in a dream of night-blooming flowers, the bitterest things turned to sweetness, the hardest things made easy, supreme deliverance from the world of seeming; we swoon in ecstasy just like Isolde, and all bonds are unloosed. It certainly caused our little Marie Dönhoff ineffable emotions too, though she writes about it briefly. What you tell me about her was a great joy to me."

This performance of *Tristan* which Frau von Schleinitz had attended in Munich awakened strange feelings in Frau Cosima. For it was during this and the weeks that followed that the famous attempt was being made to induce Hans von Bülow to accept a position as director of music in Warsaw. This was undertaken by Marie Mouchanoff, who did so with absolute enthusiasm and the most loyal intentions. Frau Cosima was aware of her attempt and blessed the great and noble-minded woman for honouring Bülow so highly; for the Countess had written to her daughter: " The certainty of having him in Warsaw would open up a higher life to me. Our musical future would be saved and Serge's reputation as president would be assured *in sæcula sæculorum.* What Bülow has achieved is a revelation exactly in the same sense as that of Wagner."

But Frau Cosima had now to devote her whole time to the move into town, where they had rented an apartment in the Wölfels' house in the Dammallee. Thus she enjoyed the last hours at the Fantaisie with quite exceptional feelings, and the evenings that she spent there with the Master were fateful indeed. They read together Görres's preface to *Lohengrin,* which revealed to them the connexion of the Grail legend with other myths of antiquity. It is clear that Wagner was already engaged in quite an intensive study of the Parsifal legend. At the same time, however, he once more read her *Faust,* and especially the Dedication, in a way " such as I shall never experience again." He was trying to obtain a clear idea of the tone in which it ought to be recited — a wholly natural and simple one. All would be lost, he said, were the actor to give the impression that he had any notion of its metaphysical import. " In it is contained the whole plan." It is wonderful how the two of them to a certain extent rank the close of *The Twilight of the Gods* below that of *Faust.* Once more they wandered together in the lovely moonlight — accompanied by the " glad (*heiter*)" moon. " The sad moon is the waning one, from which one shrinks in alarm, when one suddenly perceives it by night making its way to one through narrow window-panes." But she was deeply melancholy: " Something he said yesterday cast a real veil of mourning over my spirits. He said that he thought he had heart trouble."

They wandered through the park, in their hearts bidding farewell to the trees. On their way to the town they passed the cemetery — " Richard pointed his finger at it, and said: 'It is you alone who keep me here. Had I not found you, I should never have had the heart for a single enterprise again, I should have been overpowered by disgust. People had an instinct that I should do nothing more, and I had the same feeling. And what I have achieved is too pitiful. Nowhere am I listened to. If I had only once been consulted by someone in exalted quarters as to the setting of the theatre! But to be ignored like this! All our best powers are being turned towards mechanical invention. In all families the sons are becoming engineers, perhaps emigrating to America, and those who stay behind and devote themselves to science are spiritless creatures.' "

Once again the whole trouble of the move fell upon her shoulders, and she completely wore herself out. Moreover, the very day of the move was accompanied by news that was far from gratifying. Feustel informed them of the disagreement between Prussia and Bavaria: the King, he said, had offended the Crown Prince by not offering to lend him one of his palaces, while the latter had offended the King by his message: " I am going to inspect the army." The King instructed his ministers to safeguard his rights, but in vain. " God knows how this will end," she remarks, no doubt taking the situation too seriously; and Feustel, too, like everybody else, talked far too much about the King. What he had heard was on the whole nothing but what diplomatists, both male and female, were whispering to one another in order to create an atmosphere of opposition to the lonely monarch. Thus on October 9 Franz Liszt had written from Schillingsfürst to Marie Wittgenstein telling her that at the Wartburg he had met Frau von Werthern, wife of the German Minister in Munich, " who told me about certain eccentricities of the King. He has had a lake made in the winter garden of his palace in Munich, on which he rows in a boat, catching a cold in the head in the process. In order to get warm again, he is said to have given orders that a Vesuvius, complete with eruptions, should be arranged to his taste in the middle of a picturesque landscape." Wagner utterly condemned such talk and said that the King's poetical dreams were very innocent faults in so young a man. " If they are not overlooked, but are trumpeted abroad with so much noise, this is chiefly due to malice and other such qualities." The same might really have been said of Feustel, who was at that time in very high feather. He had refused the office of Minister of Finance; but, owing to the connexions which he had thus gained, he had thought that in the further negotiations about Bayreuth he could adopt quite a different tone towards the King's subordinates from that which he had hitherto used, and by doing so had produced an effect quite contrary to that which he had intended. Soured by this, he too joined in the talk about the " illness " of the King, saying that he had retired to his most elevated hunting-box, which could only be reached by struggling through the snow for an hour and a half, and was now laid up there with a violent cold in the head. This was characteristic of the way in which these stories about the King spread from court to official circles, serving no purpose but that of producing mutual ill humour.

Meanwhile, however, Liszt had paid his daughter a surprise visit. On October 15 he arrived at Bayreuth from Schillingsfürst, after an abominable journey involving five changes, and found his way on foot to the house in the Dammallee with his manservant and a porter; notwithstanding which he was well and cheerful. On the next morning he went to church, returning at eight o'clock to breakfast, when they had a long and enjoyable gossip. They next drove to the site of the building operations, visited the Opera-house, and also inspected the dwelling-house which was in course of construction. In the evening Muncker and Feustel were invited, and Liszt played his *Christus*, which of course sounded quite different as played by himself. He talked to the children a good deal, especially to Lulu, but also to Cosima. It was clear from all this that the Princess was tormenting him by insisting that he must avoid Wagner's influence, whether as an artist or a man, and by saying that his self-respect demanded that he should never see Cosima again. " We had been guilty " — so Cosima records the Princess as saying — " of the moral murder of Hans, etc. It saddened me greatly that my father should be tormented in this way. He is so weary, and they are for ever nagging at him. That ill-omened (*unselig*) woman in Rome, especially, has never had anything better to do than to stir him up, but he will never abandon me, nor us either. This conversation detained me for a long time with my father, and unfortunately Richard was hurt at my leaving him so long alone. I found it difficult to find excuses, and there was a slight tension all day. Then Feustel came with the carriage. I had promised Mimi to inspect an estate for her. The roads were bad, and we kept climbing in and climbing out! We had a breakdown an hour's walk from the town. Father was unable to walk, so Richard started off to order a carriage for us." They succeeded, however, in getting back to Bayreuth with Feustel and went to the Thursday Club, where Liszt felt very much at home. On the following evening there was an invitation from some twenty Bayreuthers, including the " Nibelung Chancery," (*Nibelungenkanzlei*).[1] Liszt played, and enchanted everybody. The Master proposed his health in the words: " A noble spirit and a good Christian. Long live Franz Liszt! " Count Lerchenfeld, the President, was also present as a guest. On the following day Liszt talked about Weimar, saying that the Grand Duke was extraordinarily prejudiced against the undertaking and had said: " I shall not give a sou for Bayreuth." And this after he had acted a part to Wagner all through the winter! Exaggerated reports had also been received about the Princess Hohenlohe, who was said to have already collected eighteen thousand gulden for Bayreuth.

But the supreme moment of Liszt's visit was the reading of *Parsifal,* to which he listened with the greatest emotion. He said that it was far and away Richard Wagner's grandest conception, and added: " And there you are, still wrangling with singers and actors." " Richard replied that if people would only give him the 300,000 thalers on condition that he never produced the *Nibelungs,* he would be contented and glad and would get to work." Liszt insisted on making the necessary round of calls, as Wagner and Frau Cosima had always done, too. Then in the evening he played Bach fugues, *Tristan,* and much besides. " A grand, expansive feeling prevailed that he belonged to us, and that we were not to be separated from him. He even discussed the project of settling here altogether. Alas, I have scarcely any faith left in what is reasonable. My father was uncommonly emancipated in his views on all questions; he expressed his admiration of Bismarck, recognized the power of the Protestant chorale, and thought that the clerical party was doomed. But he is weary, weary. And so, next morning, there will be a sorrowful parting, my father leaving for Regensburg, where he will spend his birthday quietly, without being spied upon. He starts at 11 o'clock, he was pleased with Bayreuth. He leaves sad thoughts behind him. All that he tells us about the world is horrible, yet none the less he belongs to it. And Richard said that my soul was troubled and that he found himself in a novel situation. Formerly I had paid attention to nobody but him, I had hung on him and his words alone, and this was what had sustained him and made him happy. But now, he said, everything was changed. He is profoundly mistaken; only I cannot prove it to him and must keep silence."

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[1] An association of young musicians, led by Josef Rubinstein and Anton Seidl (Glasenapp, V, 34).—Tr.

Liszt, however, wrote from Regensburg, where he had met Count Eduard Du Moulin at the Goldene Kreuz and spent his birthday in his company, though he does not mention this anywhere, not even to the Princess, to whom he gave the following account of the day spent in Regensburg at the Goldene Kreuz: " Regensburg was on my way from Bayreuth to Vienna. I broke the journey there, in order to spend my sixtieth birthday quietly. My intention was to receive the Holy Communion in the morning, but I could not find a single confessor in the cathedral and did not want to cause any disturbance in the sacristy, so I contented myself with hearing mass." He wrote about Cosima, however, as follows: " Cosima is surpassing herself. Let others judge and condemn her, for me she remains a soul worthy of the great forgiveness of St. Francis, and my admirable daughter." And the Princess had to hear this, painful though it was to her. On October 31 he again wrote to his daughter from Hungary: " Your dear letter and the photographs and pamphlets which you sent reached me in Vienna. I thank you most of all for the trouble you have taken with the copy of *Parsifal*, which I accept with due gratitude. The extracts from this radiant (*strahlenden*) work which Wagner read me have left a living impression on my heart. I felt transfigured after it, and it was only the fear of seeming affected that restrained me; otherwise I should have said to him, like Peter: 'It is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles.' " He had, however, to admit that Marie Hohenlohe had been out in her statement of accounts by a whole cipher. On the other hand, he said that it would be possible to secure the royalties on *Tannhäuser*. He then had his symphonic poems and recently printed works sent to his daughter, with the remark that it was only a foolish modesty, " for which I blame myself, that prevented me from sending them to Wagner before." But the Master remained in a state of nerves for a long time. " I am nothing but love to you! " he said. " But you, it seems, are something else! " " At which," she adds, " I can only jest."

Then came the day of her reception into the Protestant Church, a step of which her father approved, in spite of his piety. The Dean had made all preparations, and she herself composed her mind for this moment with the profound sentiments which she had formerly experienced as a child in Paris, when she took her first communion. On the evening before, she had a long talk with her husband about the children, which — so she writes — revealed all his immeasurable love and kindness. " We have no conception of how happy we are." But then, oddly enough, the Master began to talk about Liszt again, and in such violent terms that Cosima could only keep silence. " I must indeed have been guilty of some neglect during those days," she writes, " to make it possible that Richard should continue to be so jealous. But it seems to me that it is not right of him to fly out at me so violently time after time. It is not the wrong that is done to us that goes to the depths of one's heart; but only the wrong that we do to others. And even if Richard is still suffering, I cannot see that I have done him any wrong, except perhaps on that one morning when the sad revelations about Hans so upset me that in such a mood I could not venture near him. And now I could almost wish, for the sake of peace, that my father might never come again. I do not do so, for I hope to be more fortunate and more adroit in future! " Such was the problem that intruded itself into her life at this point and weighed upon her in addition to all her other afflictions.

It was with these feelings that, at ten o'clock on the morning of October 31, she joined the Dean in the church, where Feustel and Muncker were present as witnesses. She received the Holy Communion in the sacristy. " It was a deeply moving act, my whole soul trembled, our Dean spoke from the depths of his heart. Richard profoundly moved. How lovely indeed is religion! What power could it not produce in us! We were all in a mood of devout and solemn exaltation. God is love, said the Dean. In such a frame of mind I should like to die. Could one but continue in it till the end of one's life! When Richard and I embraced each other, I felt that not till now had our union been sealed, not till now were we being united in Christ. May I rise from this solemn act a new creature! Oh, might I but love suffering, seek it out for myself, and be a dispenser of happiness! I am happy, for I yearn to belong to the Christian community, to feel myself and to prove myself a Christian woman. And this has been granted to me. To receive the communion together with Richard had an almost deeper significance for me than going to the altar with him. Oh, how kind fate is to me! How can I be grateful enough! All is grace, grace of love, heavenly grace! " Yet on August 25, out at the Fantaisie, she had thought with the deepest emotion of her wedding-day. " We observed ' the King's birthday ' with the children, but our wedding-day we celebrated by remaining together, Richard and I. He read me the work he has done, then we went to my bench at the Schweizerei in the Wolfschlucht. At 6:30 he left me and went home. I remained behind, and, while the sun was setting and the stems of the fir-trees were aglow, I thought long of my happiness. What might not have become of me? Despised, robbed of my children, no wife of Richard's, I might have gone into hiding! Now I may stand beside him as his wedded wife and live for my children — how ineffable is my gratitude! Blessings upon Hans, who made all this possible! " At eight o'clock she returned home and the Master greeted her by saying that she was his little woman of the woods (*Waldweibchen*).

There was no end to the alarming news about the King. Marie

Mouchanoff too had already told them how among the people there was already talk of his madness, and in addition to this there was his hatred of Prussia — though it was his only protection. And Frau Cosima writes: " I beg Richard to put his anxiety about all this out of his head. For anticipation of the catastrophe can alter nothing and improve nothing." And in this she was indeed right; for there was a great deal more gossip, directed chiefly towards making Bayreuth in a sense impossible. Most curious elements must have been brought into play here, whose manœuvres have not been fully exposed even today. But the Master suffered himself to be pacified by his wife's clear-sighted and tactful words; for, after all, it was Ludwig who had made it possible for him to complete *The Ring*, and in the years 1872 and 1873 it would have been an easy matter to influence the King in the right direction, as indeed Bismarck was able to do at critical moments even later.

At this time, however, the Master was living entirely in the Grail legend. It is not assuming too much to see a deep and positively metaphysical connexion between the celebration of the Holy Communion in which Frau Cosima and her husband had taken part together and the first intimations of the conception of *Parsifal*. The excitement which moved him when he turned to this new work now became strongly evident. He himself spoke of the impression which the church service had made upon him: " How beautiful it was within the narrow confines of the sacristy! How powerfully the tones of the Dean's voice rang out! What else could take the place of that which stirs within one at the unspeakably affecting words: 'This is my body.' " The character of the liturgy also went to his heart. Did I not hesitate to use such a word in this connexion, I might almost say that it made an artistic impression upon him. And so we feel that the communion scene in the first act of *Parsifal* was already foreshadowed.

Meanwhile he was occupied with a whole series of other questions: for instance, that raised by Nietzsche: " On the birth of the drama from music." " Just as the child in the womb is nourished by its mother's blood, so drama draws its life from music. This is a mystery." In this connexion he touched on his theme " What is German? (*Was ist deutsch?*)" saying about that essay: " It is becoming a purely metaphysical question to me." Further, he pursued his studies of the Grail legend far beyond Wolfram von Eschenbach and Chrestien de Troyes, and it was Görres's remarkable and singular book, which contains more imagination than fact, that furnished him with fruitful ideas, besides which, in connexion with his ideas for the essay *What is German?* it led him to recognize the Celtic origin of the Grail legend. He remarked at that time that Grimm had laid far too little stress on the Celtic element in the saga; the bloody lance was derived from the bards, and Parzival himself was originally Celtic. It was altogether pleasing to him, he said, to think that in the treatment of legend he was akin to the Greeks. Greek mysticism had known nothing of a creator of the world. The power of nature had attracted them, because they feared it, and if Plato spoke of a God, this was but an Egyptian mystery misunderstood, God being the symbol of the mystery of the Inexplicable: one might accept this. Thus he meditated on these questions, and from such things he was able to draw courage and strength, not only for his new work, but also for all the practical affairs of life.

There was much, indeed, that put his patience and endurance severely to the test, and he exclaimed: " I should like to have the foundations [of the theatre] filled up and not worry myself about it any more. The Germans are a bad lot (*sind schlecht*). This is a case for patience and endurance." In addition to this there was the worry about his own house, the building of which was proceeding under great difficulties. But both of them were unhappy because the King was ordering nothing but furniture of the period of Louis XIV. And so the two turned away from all these things — even from Bayreuth — to the glorious " race " of the Hohenstaufen. " They advance towards us," she writes, " like a vision of classic grandeur. Great statesmen and rulers, and poets as well. But all was ruined for us by the court of Rome, that is why I am so bitter against that power and so furious." Next, however, she went on to talk to him consolingly about the Bayreuth enterprise: " If it fails," she said, " we may think of Queen Louise's reply to Napoleon: ' It was permissible for the grandsons of Frederick the Great to dare the impossible . . . !' And the author of *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *The Mastersingers*, *Tristan*, and *The Nibelungs*, too, might dare the impossible." Upon which he threw his arms round her and cried: " You marvellous woman! (*Du reiche Frau!*)"

Bayreuth, too, was aware of the tremendous agitation against the enterprise, and the Dean gave it as his opinion that: " If the plan is realized, the results will be incalculable," upon which the Master said that it was his vocation to set an example . . . " The reason why the princes are so hostile to me is that they behaved badly towards me in the past, and since I am not dead after all, they hate me. There is an old saying that it is curious how we hate those whom we have injured." Amid all the cares that caused them sleepless nights, Frau Cosima said: " In spite of all, I feel that God loves us and is protecting us! " And he replied: " Yes, indeed, the whole world is blind, but none the less bears within it an impulse towards truth and realization (*Erkenntnis*). Every good thing that has been, still exists, one has only to disregard time and space, for eternity is present in every moment. The whole is for ever reproducing itself over and over again; if there is light, it cannot be extinguished, it must illuminate. Thanks to the solace of absorption in the universal, we can forget the grossness of the particular."

This conversation took place after they had started out together on their great tour of the German theatres in search of a cast for the performances which, as the Master still supposed, were to take place in the year 1874.

Shortly before starting, Frau Cosima had written to the Countess Schleinitz as follows: " Next Wednesday, dear, we begin our tour with Würzburg. Think of us poor souls on our journey through this inferno of postilions and prophets, troubadours and Hamlets, we feel like the reunited Paolo and Francesca, but we shall certainly not meet with Virgil and Dante. But I will not complain, for one of these whirlwinds will carry us to Berlin and I shall once more have the happiness of embracing you with all my heart, when we can say more to each other in a moment than by a whole heap of note-paper." It is significant that when she goes on to mention the short visit of her friend Marie

Mouchanoff after the performance of *Tristan* at Munich, she begs Frau von Schleinitz to make no efforts to secure a performance of it in Berlin, but only to use her influence with a view to the production of *Lohengrin*, which the Master himself offered to conduct. It was clear that, in the actual conditions of the court opera in Berlin, this wish could not have been realized even by the imperial favour.

And so they started out on their tour, which had a double significance both for Bayreuth and for Frau Cosima; for during this rapid passage from town to town she learnt to know the German theatres, to judge and condemn what they had to offer, but also to distinguish the precious metal among the dross. This was of supreme importance in view of her later mission, of which she had, of course, no presentiment at that time. Moreover — and this was a more important matter — it was her task to keep the nerves of the Master fit to take in all that he was now experiencing and, it may be added, suffering as an artist. How important it was for him to have her near him is shown by a remark he made, that the touch of her hands had a magnetic effect upon him, like that of soft silk. When he raged like a stormy sea, she alone could calm him, and when he threatened to collapse as a result of his painful impression of the degeneracy of the theatre, she alone could revive him; and she did so most amply.

And so they came to Würzburg, where they heard a performance of *Don Giovanni*. But far more important than this were the memories which they recalled together in the most tender intimacy. As they wandered through the streets of the beautiful city on the Main, she now gained a clear vision of the surroundings amid which the Master had done his first work, the composition of *Die Feen* (*The Fairies*). But the beauty of the buildings and churches, and, above all, that of the palace, also made an impression upon her, and the ascent of the glorious flight of steps leading up to it enchanted her. Indeed, during the whole journey she used her leisure hours to make herself thoroughly acquainted with the beauties of the towns. This at once satisfied a craving and produced a soothing and uplifting effect upon the Master, to whom she acted as guide.

From Wiesbaden she reported her impression of the theatres to her motherly friend Malwida, and this letter really says all that there is to say about the journey up to this point. " From Wiesbaden, the first resting-place in our wild chase, I send you a good and splendid greeting, beloved Mother! How this letter will turn out I do not know. The various opera performances, railway trains, and official speeches are all buzzing in my head, but I do not want to leave you any longer without news of us. It will be three weeks on Sunday since we deserted the dear children, first stop Würzburg, very agreeable (*Don Giovanni*), the Ritters, the flight of steps leading up to the palace; second stop Frankfurt, most abominable (Jews), *Le Prophète*, shopping. Third stop Darmstadt, good again (Brand[t], the theatrical machinist, banquet of the Wagner-Verein, with military music, *Maurer und Schlosser*)." She made a curious entry in her diary about Darmstadt: how the Master had wept over the decay of the theatre, and how at the performance of *Maurer und Schlosser* he had commiserated the singers no less than the composer. They travelled very gaily by way of Würzburg to Frankfurt and Darmstadt, and as they crossed the Spessart Pass, on which the first snow was lying, the Master had said that this was the scene of *Götz von Berlichingen*, where he had attacked the Nuremberg merchants. Then, at Frankfurt am Main, they stayed in the room in which Bismarck and Jules Favre had signed the peace treaty. She was saddened by all the magnificence and by their walk through the wealthy city. Then she continues: " Fourth stop Mannheim, the Heckels, *The Flying Dutchman*, we are a little wearied by these kind entertainments. Fifth stop Stuttgart (friendly intendant, *Les Huguenots*, and our friend Marie Mouchanoff)." At Mannheim they stayed at the Hotel Marquart and she revived the memory of the day when the young King had come to the rescue of the Master in his bitter need. " Next a meeting with Nietzsche in Strassburg. This was not a business visit; we wanted to see our friends and devoted two days to the purpose. Nietzsche looked very well and was vigorous and cheerful. He told me that he had written to you a short time before — I do not believe he is a zealous correspondent; gifted men seldom are. I was delighted to hear Nietzsche talking about Monod, who seems to have made an extraordinarily agreeable impression upon him." From Strassburg, too, she wrote with tender solicitude to Nietzsche's friend Erwin Rohde about his recently published brochure *Afterphilologie,* which had been treated with the greatest hostility by his colleagues: " I may say that seldom has a piece of writing moved me so much or afforded me so much profit — both profit and grief, for it is an achievement of which you certainly foresaw the far-reaching results, just as I now see them happening; and so I cry: All hail to you for being what you are, and thinking and acting as you do." " From Strassburg to Karlsruhe, *Tannhäuser,* the Grand Duchess (a good and promising visit), from Karlsruhe to Mainz and Wiesbaden, where we expect Fridolin. The day after tomorrow we go to Cologne, and then God knows where; one object of the journey, besides finding singers, is to put some life into the Wagner societies and increase the flow of subscriptions, for this winter must decide whether or no the affair can be organized by 1874. There you have a survey of our activities. So far as the art of the theatre is concerned, we have ascertained that there is certainly something to be done with the singers, and that voices and musical talent are to be found. But everything is kept at a low level by the conductors (*Taktschläger*) and stage managers. By this time you will have received Rohde's splendid brochure from Nietzsche, and will, I am sure, have read it with the same pleasure as I did."

From Wiesbaden they went to Mainz, where they found Wagner's publisher, the Wagner Society founded by him, and much besides. In their more intimate circle, however, the Master and his wife had a conversation about ghostly apparitions, which Frau Cosima had started apropos of Danner's book. " I do not like all these interpretations," she said, " I believe in the appearance of spirits, but the fact that they cannot be explained is more eloquent than all explanations! Curiously enough, Richard's dreams are nearly always circumstantial, not mere apparitions of particular people; for instance, his last bad dream about his wife was that she had taken leave of him, and that he would never see her again in dreams." This was a reaction from all they had to go through in their outward and public life; for, in spite of all the external jubilation and applause which marked their progress, they did not find it enjoyable, Frau Cosima being particularly depressed by her meeting with poor Mathilde Meyer, who was now to some extent cut off from them by her defective hearing.

But now came the most beautiful part of the journey. They took the boat down the Rhine, and the voyage once more made a great impression upon Frau Cosima. As they passed the Lorelei's rock, the Master spoke of Liszt's *Lorelei*, praising the vigour of the themes, and so they again fell to discussing Liszt's creative work in general: " It is all interesting," said the Master, " even when it is insignificant; a melody to which it is hard to write a bass! " They passed by Nonnenwerth, where her father, mother, and sister had once lived; and she thought of her dead brother: " Yesterday I was so possessed by the memory of Daniel that I could not help talking about him to Richard, who had seen him; and all he said was ' Euphorion.' " [1] But this was the most beautiful thing he could have said about the dear boy who was dead.

Next they stayed in Cologne. Frau Cosima went to see the Dürer in the Museum, and the " *Pfeifer und Drommeter* (Piper and Trumpeter)" seemed to her like Shakspere without words. The cathedral, on the other hand, produced a chilling impression upon her: " There is nothing about it to suggest a devotional spirit," she said, adding that she far preferred the cathedral at Strassburg. Cologne Cathedral reminded her involuntarily of Medusa: " Here we have a complete idea of the world, a thing nowhere visible or in existence, but that fills one with terror." The theatre filled her with horror. She felt that in Cologne it was the rich stock-brokers who had most voice in matters. But she said that one should say nothing of the public, for it stood for the world, which one did not criticize, but took for what it was worth: " The artists are to blame for it all," she said, " for they could obtain a hold over the public and elevate it through its thirst for amusement, and it is at least superior to these clods [*Stöpsel*] of directors and stage managers, who do not even know that when the Queen of Night appears, it ought to be night." And she said of the dominating influences there, chief among whom was her father's old enemy Hiller: " The strange thing about these people is that they want to play a great part before they have done anything, whereas efficiency ought surely to come first, and influence afterwards."

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[1] The son of Faust and Helen, *Faust*, Part II, Act iii.—Tr.

Meanwhile she wandered about the city and looked at all the churches, taking a pleasure in them and the impressions which they made upon her, and telling the Master about them. Thus she says: " On returning home I described my wanderings, my delight in the common people of Cologne, who are obliging, witty, and lively, the unfavourable impression made upon me by the cathedral, and my dissatisfaction with the Gothic."

A particular disappointment was in store for them at Hanover. But even the worst performance moved her to wonderful thoughts. Thus after a thoroughly bad performance of *Oberon* she writes: " How surpassingly fine this delicate piece of work is, how one ought, for the sake of the music, to make every effort to give it life and render it beautifully, while at the same time not stifling it with magnificence. Such is the way of the world! While he lived, they let him work for the English light stage (*Possentheater*), and after his death they hail his work as a masterpiece and murder it (*verschleudern es*). Oh, Germany! And thus will it ever be. The music makes an ineffable impression upon me, virginal, naïve, and pure! Something of Schiller's spirit breathed in Weber, with something joyous and gay as well. I told Richard that, while I do not, of course, regard him as such a genius as Mozart, yet he is far nearer to us. ' Ah,' he retorted, ' there was quite a new note to be heard in him. It was the German note.' He coincided with the period of national revival, romanticism, and the cultivation of old German art." In the cathedral, on the other hand, at the sound of the organ and the chorales, she once more fell into a beautiful and Faust-like mood: " *Die Träne quillt, die Erde hat mich wieder* (A teardrop falls, the earth owns me once more)." And she thought of *The Mastersingers,* and with tears in his eyes the Master too remembered the time when he had written it. " If future generations find refreshment in this work, let them be mindful amid what tears these smiles blossomed."

Magdeburg brought her impressions all its own; for here her husband showed her the house and the high gable from which he had called down to his clever poodle in the street below, when it had strayed away for several days; and how the dog suddenly noticed him, walked upstairs, and stayed with him. He showed her the town in which the Schröder-Devrient concert had taken place. The theatre was unaltered, and he told her how, while he was conducting here in a sky-blue swallow-tail coat and monstrous cuffs, he had felt as though he were in heaven. And they went to the street where Minna had lived, where he spent the whole day. Then to the " Stadt Braunschweig," where he had had to pacify his creditors. Then on to the cathedral, to the tomb of Otto the Great, where they called to mind the merits of their present Kaiser: how he had made it possible for the great man to remain at his side and carry through a great work which could only be accomplished by the force of legitimacy. They then continued their journey to Dessau, where they were delighted by a brilliant performance of *Orpheus*, where the Duke and the Intendant of the theatre, Herr von Normann, received them with the most touching cordiality, and Frau Cosima was especially enchanted with the Duchess.

Quite other memories revived in Leipzig. Here they found Heinrich Brockhaus, now blind, and made up their long-standing quarrel with him. On seeing his grievous affliction Frau Cosima was involuntarily reminded of the serving-man in Raimund's *Spendthrift* (*Verschwender*), who had heaped wrong upon wrong and had had to suffer for it in his old age. And so they returned once more to Bayreuth, where the children gave them a hearty and joyous welcome, and Christmas was celebrated in the old delightful way.

It is interesting to note how she now began to take part in the consultations with the Managing Committee (*Verwaltungsrat*), about which she writes to Marie von Schleinitz: " Feustel was really unwilling to sign the contract, but the burgomaster, who has in general a bad reputation for timidity (Bayreuth is the only town that has no debt), carried him away, and, trusting in Wagner's wonderful work, they set their names to it. This imposes heavy obligations upon us, and I look forward to this year

'73 with an anxious heart." Wagner might well remark: "*Schweres hast du mir beschieden, Pythischer, Du arger Gott* (A heavy task hast thou allotted me, O Pythian god, thou grim deity)." And with such sentiments as these did she close her diary: "With the expression of this feeling I will close this volume, in which I have sincerely recorded nothing but the truth. May God forgive me my sins, give me good children, grant Richard health and happiness, and let Hans attain happiness and freedom. Amen."

But she did not let the year draw to its close without writing her friend another letter, in which she gave expression to her deepest feelings in a way that shows how, from quiet Bayreuth, she cherished and watched over that world of friends and friendship which she had built up for herself: "Here it seems as though we felt the sufferings of our friends more feelingly at a distance than if we could see them near at hand. Thus the news of your accident, dear Mother, was truly alarming, and I can only hope that in your next letter you will be able to give us news of your complete recovery. Our good wishes for the new year must be concentrated upon this, for I dare hardly wish for a meeting in pleasant circumstances, our next meeting being bound to be a sad one. Olga [1] must already have left you, and it is certain that we shall miss her from our reunion, and do so with dread; for the 'foreign spirit (*der waelsche Geist*)' grows more and more repellent to us. I have just started several excellent things coming from there [France], among which I am bound to reckon Thiers's *Déposition*, besides my mother's history, Havet's *Origines du christianisme* (certainly an important book), and an excellent treatise by L. D. Ronchaud on the peplum of Pallas Athene — each of these interested me, yet in all I recognized that ill-omened land, that unhappy spirit in which all that is best there originates. Everything must be forced into a conventional mould: research, poetry, history, everything. For one the Revolution is a dogma, for another good manners (*die Artigkeit*); everywhere we find limitations, which obscure the vision

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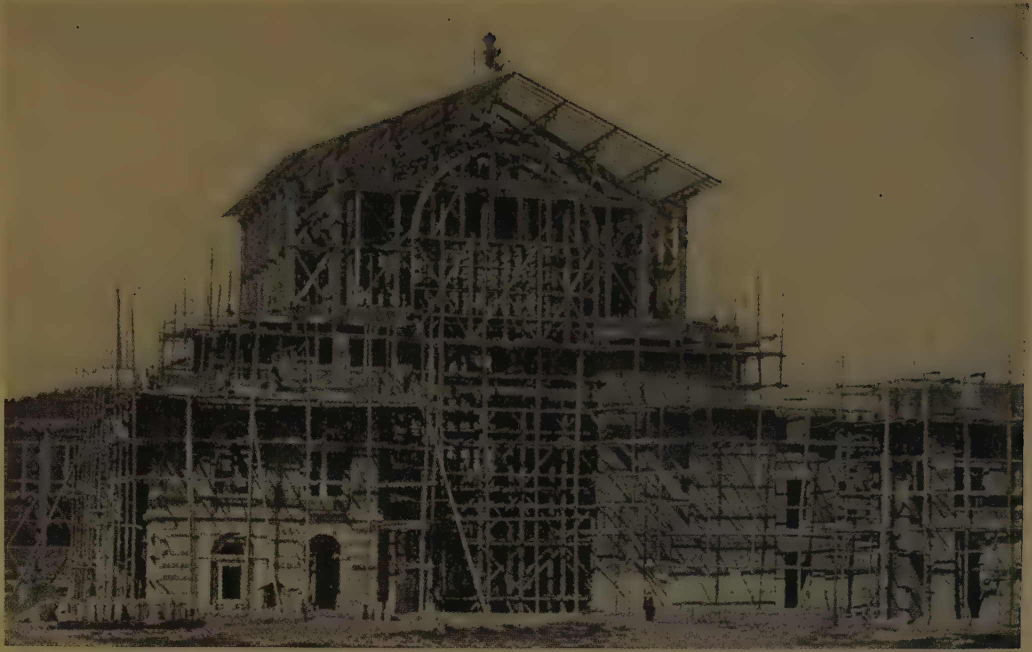
[1] Olga Herzen, a daughter of Alexander Herzen, the Russian revolutionary and man of letters, to whom Fräulein von Meysenbug was governess. She married Professor Monod of Paris. — Tr.



THE FESTIVAL THEATRE UNDER CONSTRUCTION, 1874

—*Photograph by J. Hartmann, Bayreuth*

even of the best minds. Now the question is whether Olga's perceptions have become keen enough to see this at once. Mine were not a few years ago. If they have not, perhaps she will feel at home in her new element, for there is no denying that great talents are to be found there, and Bernays of Bonn (an Israelite, it is true, and therefore well-disposed towards the French) considers that our neighbours will soon have outstripped us in science, and that the time of German decadence is approaching. Be that as it may, I can no longer take any pleasure in the French, nor in the Germans either, I might almost add here, like Hamlet — for it simply breaks my heart that Wagner has still to go round from place to place conducting concerts in order to raise funds for our undertakings; yet I ought to thank God if his strength suffices to guide and direct the enterprise when once it has been made materially secure. But that, too, depends upon fate, and we must bend till we break." She was already making preparations for Malwida's proposed move to Bayreuth, though at the same time warning her against the raw climate of the town in the Fichtelgebirge; but she did so full of hope and joy at the prospect of having her motherly friend with her and sent her a joyous invitation to come and stay with them in the new house, where all further matters could be discussed. "If you object that you are too old," she wrote, "well, you are not coming to stay with wild young things, life makes such demands on us that, when we are not reading, we for the most part maintain an understanding silence. I think I have now told you everything on this point that I tell myself."

No less interesting are Frau Cosima's views on the political situation. "Have you read Renan's book *De la réforme intellectuelle* (*On Intellectual Reform*), and what has the good Schuré to say now about Thiers's judgment of Herr von Bismarck? In this *Déposition* a Frenchman has for the first time stated the true facts about the declaration of war. Bismarck's leaving the Prussian Ministry is a momentous step; God knows whether, indefatigable as he is, he will succeed in merging Prussia in Germany. It is certain that he did not succeed in carrying through his plans in Prussia, and that is why he retired. When did the greatest of acts ever help a great man to attain true power? " The glimpse which she gives her friend of the quiet study at Bayreuth is truly uplifting; for the reading of which she speaks was also in a sense productive work, as in the peaceful days at Triebschen, which were continued here. All this was accompanied, it is true, by severe anxieties about the house and housekeeping, and she writes: " This year ends hardly, and the prospect of 1873 is equally hard. Richard is weary of life and I can only follow him and suffer with him, not help him! I have faith alone, but no hope! The world is not ours, it belongs to other powers. But I will gladly suffer till my life's end, and had rather be sorry than glad — could I but be sorry for myself alone. But I have no choice, and I ought to desire nothing, but just accept what comes. And so at this midnight hour let me accept as a dispensation of justice all that the coming year may bring, even what is hardest. God grant me grace to do what is good! "

These are self-torturing words, almost worthy of a nun, but they are the reaction from that womanly energy of which she had to give daily proof, and, while she sorrowed and wept in secret, she always showed a cheerful face to the Master and the world. But she had every reason to be anxious. With the coming year they entered upon a gloomy phase, when everything seemed to be against them and to turn out badly; nor did Nietzsche's new work [1] do anything to cheer them up, and Frau Cosima said about it: " At times an awkward harshness is perceptible in it, combined with great depth of sensibility. We wanted him to concern himself principally with Greek themes." In fact, they were always anxious when a friend exposed himself to risk for them and their cause, thereby doing harm to himself without being of any particular service to Bayreuth. On the other hand, Frau Cosima undoubtedly possessed the right diplomatic eye for externals, and everything went through her hands. By this means the harsher elements lost their harshness, and the weak and unready were firmly moulded by her. Thus she succeeded more and more in winning the confidence of the *Verwaltungsrat* and stiffening its backbone at decisive moments. Hence it was unnecessary for her to foster the hope which was, after all, in reality the outcome of her own energy, wonderfully allied with that of the Master. She recognized, it is true, the "strangeness of the times," when everything was against her and her plans. She often cast a glance towards Bismarck — not, indeed, as a possible helper, for what could she expect of him? "Great achievements," as she herself said, "cannot help a great man. Bismarck has created Germany, Richard a German theatre, and both have to keep starting again from the beginning." How right she was! When she looked about her, nowhere could she find help save among her women friends, and there were only one or two of these who devoted all their energies to the cause of Bayreuth. During this time, too, her eyes turned towards Hans von Bülow, and when the Master said that his immoderate brusqueness was bound to do him harm, she agreed with him, though with a sorrowful heart.

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[1] *Mahnruf an die Deutschen*, written as an appeal for support for the Bayreuth scheme. — Tr.

The Master next induced their young friends who formed the Nibelung Chancery (*Nibelungenkanzlei*) to give them a performance of the *Idyll*, and they recalled past times: "Those were our poetical times," he said, "the day-spring of our love; now we are in the high noontide glare, toiling up the mountain side." But it was memory, rather than what he said, that moved her to tears. "Ah, what gifts are here entrusted to an earthen vessel," she writes, "how well I know what he must suffer when these gifts are for ever being prevented from pouring forth! He must be perpetually cramped, like a poor bird that is prevented from flying."

Indeed, the inward feelings with which she entered on this new year and the new period of travelling about were those of a soul in torment; but this did not dim the lustre of her great and distinguished nature, which shed its influence on all sides, while her husband, too, did all he could to cheer her. His birthday present, "The Blue Salon," which still adorns the walls of Wahnfried, did not arrive till the 9th, the day after the birthday of Hans von Bülow, whom Wagner toasted at dinner. She received a beautiful and affectionate letter from her father, who in this correspondence gradually entered into quite a new relation with her, which, though informed, on the one hand, by his unbounded piety, was, on the other hand, full of the keen interest which this man of genius took in everything that concerned Bayreuth, politics, and, above all, literature. In this respect, then, the correspondence between father and daughter is also an index, not only to Frau Cosima's intellectual occupations, but also to the interest which, in spite of his declining years, Liszt's youthful freshness of outlook enabled him to take in the intellectual development, not only of the German nation, but of all nations in general. The question of religion did not occasion any antagonism between father and daughter. He found, indeed, that the piety with which she was now inspired by Protestantism was just as lofty and distinguished as any other, and he associated it in a certain measure with his own views and with his interpretation of St. Paul and of the many other pious books and utterances which served him as guide.

In Bayreuth, however, Frau Cosima enjoyed her life at her husband's side and all the experiences which they shared. On January 9 he induced his friends to give another performance of the *Idyll* for her, and she listened to it with fresh delight, discovering new beauties in it every time. And how delighted she was when he read Schiller to the children! And when he pointed out *Der Taucher* (*The Diver*) to their notice, she wrote with the deepest joy: " Nobody has ever understood Schiller's delicate art so well as he." The eighth volume of Wagner's collected works (*Gesammelte Schriften*) had also to be prepared for press before they started on their tour, and the Master was considering whether he should append his poem to the King to it at the end. He had serious doubts about this and even said that he had cause to blame himself because the poem was in part untrue; but she would know who was responsible for the writing of the poem and also why it had not been completed in earlier years. " I begged him to include it," she writes, " for our gratitude to the King must be boundless "; and she adds: " At the same time I examine my heart lest any ray of vanity may possibly penetrate it. I hope to God that I may remain pure and unselfish."

On January 12 they started out on their new tour, which first took them to Dresden. She was horrified by the journey through the industrial region. " I ask myself," she writes, " with a sense of gloom, what object we are aiming at in this iron age of industry. At one last, supreme cry and aspiration of a prostrate art." In Dresden they heard *Der Freischütz* and were much impressed by it, Wagner himself ascribing the development of his own creative art in a certain measure to this work. They saw the Wesendoncks. The Master mixed in the society of the musicians and found them admirably well-disposed. Shortly before leaving for Berlin, he read Frau Cosima the passage from *Götz von Berlichingen: " Wem Gott liebt, dem gibt er ein gutes Weib* (Whom God loves, to him He gives a good wife)." She wrote a wonderful letter to " Mother Malwida " about this tour, in which she described the whole journey: " From Dresden we went to Berlin. On January 17 a reading of *The Twilight of the Gods* took place at Frau von Schleinitz's before a crowd of people of rank and brains. Seldom, I think, has so select a company, representative of all classes of society, been gathered together in a single house for a single purpose. I saw Moltke there too, much older than his pictures, with a stooping carriage and flashing eyes — and I asked myself whether the great man would be able to bear another war. May God spare both him and us any such thing. Then to Hamburg, where we found Wagner popular and his literary works well known, to an extent which we had certainly not expected. Crowds cheered us in the streets, there was no end to the serenades from military bands, and at a banquet given by the Society for Art and Science (Verein für Kunst und Wissenschaft), at which both Senate and citizens were represented, speeches of the most significant import were delivered. The decorations of the hall added to the effect: the arms of the town of Bayreuth combined with those of the city of Hamburg and surrounded by German flags. Two concerts at Hamburg brought in large receipts, and it was with deep emotion that we left a place from which we had expected profits and no more. From Hamburg to Schwerin, where the Grand-ducal family and the public showed themselves very amiable (the Grand Duke taking six *Patronatsscheine*), cheers were raised in the theatre, a military band played in the square in the presence of pretty nearly the whole population of Schwerin, and lastly there was another very well-organized banquet. Thence to Berlin, where the concert had been got up with musicians 'whose address was known to nobody save the police,' yet was a brilliant success after only three rehearsals; the Emperor and Empress present, Jewry scarcely represented, and a very brilliant and numerous audience. As soon as we had settled the business affairs (this concert brought in 5,400 thalers), we at last started homeward once more. We arrived here last Saturday and, God be thanked, found everybody well."

One of the first duties which Frau Cosima discharged was to write Frau von Schleinitz a letter, which forms in some sort a complement to that which she had written to Malwida: "At last we have reached harbour, dear friend," she writes, "and when I go over our wanderings again in my mind, now that the stormy embraces and chatter of the children have somewhat subsided, I find that there is one star that shines on them, illumines them with kindness, and guides them too: I mean your friendship, and the first and dearest task of my home-coming shall be to thank you with my whole heart. I do not mean to thank you today for all that you have done for us with unwearying loyalty, highly as I value it, but for what you mean to us, which it is difficult to express in words. When I look about me, in the endless circle of our acquaintance, and see the emptiness of most of one's relations in life, the radiance of your eye, like the 'star of the deep (*Stern der Tiefe*),'[1] is a consolation and a refreshment, and its magic transformed our stay in Berlin, which would otherwise have been so irksome, into a pleasing memory; and when I speak of thanks, well do I know that nothing but Wagner's art and the delight which you find in it can thank you."

But the impression made by the tour, and not least that which she herself made, is best revealed in the letters of her father, who in thanking her for her account of the journey wrote as follows: "Thanks, dearest daughter, for the account of your experiences in Berlin, Hamburg, and Schwerin. I take a fatherly pleasure in your personal success. The six certificates taken by the Duke of Mecklenburg set a good example and are of good augury. You have once more made use of your filial tact in your intercourse with Herr von Wolzogen, who is reckoned one of the best of his kind." Indeed, this stirring activity on the part of his daughter and "son-in-law" made a very deep impression upon him, and he lost no time in bringing strong pressure to bear upon Wagner through his daughter to induce him to give a concert at Pest, where he believed that Wagner could count, not only upon every musical resource, but also upon immense popular enthusiasm. What gave her the greatest joy was undoubtedly the comparatively cheerful picture which he drew of Bülow's activities, state of mind, and general condition, which contributed more than anything to her peace of mind; for she had gathered from the reports which had been brought to her ears — partly with malicious intent — that he was unhappy, and the moment she heard favourable news, an immense load was lifted off her mind and she felt happy and inwardly at peace. For it was still the heavy burden of self-reproach at having abandoned Hans to his misery that made it hard for her to live her life with the Master joyously and to the full, except by dint of her deep sense of duty.

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[1] *Twilight of the Gods*, III, i.—Tr.

It is clear, from his laughing warning that she was putting him in the shade, that she was well able to take her place by the Master's side and arouse people to enthusiasm for him. Her father, too, wrote very handsomely to the same effect: "Frau von Meyendorff gave me a very detailed report of your concert in Berlin, to which she added: 'Your daughter was a success everywhere, thanks to the charm, and more especially distinction, by which she won over the women and persons of note who were unacquainted with her to acknowledge her real superiority. She is in all respects so adorable that, in spite of my prejudice against universal phœnixes, I was lost in admiration of her. I, too, had to yield to the charm which emanated from her.'" This was high praise, indeed, from such a person as Frau von Meyendorff. And she said even more when she again began to speak of herself; "But," added Liszt, "I do not venture to quote this verbatim." His anxiety about the building of the house at Bayreuth was another matter; for all sorts of rumours about it were naturally going the round and in due time reached his ears, so that he wrote somewhat mistrustfully and almost offensively: " I suppose your chief business this year will be the arrangement of your house at Bayreuth. The newspapers say that you are building a house there, but I presume that for the time being you are still living outside the town. Tell me rather more details about your new domicile. Do you intend to abandon Triebschen for good, or do you mean to keep it as a *villeggiatura*? When do you think of settling definitively in Bayreuth? " She left him in no doubt on the subject, at the same time remarking emphatically that she did not trouble about the venomous reports of the outside world. This led to another letter, in which he expressed his regret in so many words for the inquiries he had made.

For the rest, however, this tour was of great importance in determining their views on the whole situation of the Empire and especially conditions in Berlin. On several occasions, indeed, there was some antagonism between them, and a certain irritability was apparent on the part of the Master, more especially at Schwerin, where he felt his wife's conversations with Herr von Bülow, the Lord Steward of the Household (*Oberst-hofmeister*), as a slight. They travelled to Berlin in silence, and not till they arrived there did a reconciliation take place, when the Master declared that nothing hurt him so much as to feel that he was not in complete harmony with her, which, he said, pained him to the roots of his being.

In Berlin she conversed with Lothar Bucher in particular, to whose transformation into a courtier she afterwards referred with her characteristically fine discrimination. But Bucher had already adopted the habit of the gentlemen of the Foreign Office of talking very freely and pessimistically about Berlin affairs. Thus he asserted that the Empress Augusta and the Crown Princess were absolutely anti-German in sentiment, and insisted that the Empress's servants wore black beards, and must therefore be Catholics, forming a sort of Third Order. But far more important was what he told her about a conversation between Bismarck and the Crown Princess, who had said to him: " You would like to play the part of Cromwell, wouldn't you? " To which Bismarck replied: " A foreign princess must be allowed to be ignorant of how closely the German nobility are bound up with their Prince, and that, just as my fathers lived and died for their princes, so I too live and die for the Emperor. I must of course add that this sentiment will disappear with me; my sons are quite different, and it is quite possible that one of them may feel like Cromwell." And Bucher went on to say how anxious Bismarck was about the future stability of the German Empire, whose commercial relations he was, however, strengthening. Wagner listened to the conversation and added the comment: " It is only idealism that is lacking. This messing about (*Flunkereien*) with the University of Strassburg, this neglect of all artistic institutions — do you think there will be no vengeance for this? "

Thus there is always a vein of melancholy running through it all, of which Frau Cosima could never quite rid herself, whether with regard to politics or music. The concert included a performance of the Overture to *Tannhäuser*, and at the rehearsal she could not help thinking of the first performance, conducted by Hans von Bülow in 1856: " It was violently hissed, he fainted, I went home to his mother and stayed up late till he returned, so that he might know — that there was one human soul which thanked him for his pains. These thanks were the origin of our engagement." But it did indeed make a deep impression upon her to be brought into close contact with all the notable personages in Berlin, and especially with the ladies; and her father was right in saying that she had charmed everybody; for even Frau von Meyendorff, who had once acted as a spy on her, now sent Liszt eulogistic reports of her and came and asked her whether she forgave her for having been so nasty. This affected Frau Cosima deeply, more especially because of this lady's attachment to her father. Yet there was one thing which put her out of humour with her father. She was hurt at his playing for Robert Franz, and for many other objects, too, when he had refused to do anything for Bayreuth; and she let him know this very thoroughly. Nor was there any lack of other disappointments. Very interesting is the profound change in her feelings towards her former friend Georg Herwegh, who sent her his collected poems at this time. They made the worst possible impression upon her, and she said that he had sat at the feet of

Heine, and that she was sure he had gone through Sedan and what followed it in vain. This was a message from the world which grieved her, as did so many other things. Her thoughts went back to the old Zürich days, when her father had been so intimate with Herwegh; the Master, too, revived his memories and his anger at the behaviour of them both. " That journey with Father and Herwegh," she writes, " during which the two of them went on talking about personal affairs in French, while he was present! I thought it showed a lack of consideration that they should always talk French. . . . Whereupon Richard reproached me with my French connexions, saying that they always made him feel a stranger. All that he hated found expression in this language, everything that was worthless, mere gossip. And once again I travel far along this sorry path owing to my father's visit. And so I am driven more and more into silence, for what am I to say, how am I to express myself in such circumstances? "

But these were only slight discords, of which no more was heard at Bayreuth. She had already begun to make preparations for her husband's sixtieth birthday, and that so discreetly that he noticed nothing till the right moment. Every evening they read together and passed everything in review, from German folk-songs and Luther's hymns to Nietzsche; they read them all, and the criticisms and observations added by the Master form quite a distinct kind of productive work, which finds an echo in Frau Cosima's diaries, far fresher and more vivid than the utterances of Goethe as recorded in the *Conversations* with Eckermann. It was the spirit of Beethoven, above all, that hovered over them almost daily, and either together or in the company of some of their young friends they enjoyed one or other of his works, which was not only performed, but analysed by the Master in his unique fashion. She was frequently able to note that the conversation was merry and sublime; for whatever question she introduced he would enlarge upon in his own wonderful way, and thus they really came to discuss all questions connected with German culture. It might be music or painting, as, for instance, Dürer's " *Gebetbuch* (Prayer-book)," which she showed him, or the Indian legends and poems, in which she took a lively interest, inclining to think that they, and especially the *Novaii*, might be set to music and worked up into a libretto for an opera. Upon which the Master rejoined: " No, for it would have to be for a court of a kind we do not possess. In the *Malakita* what attracts us is the picture of the manners and customs of the court: everything that is original in our behaviour (*originell sich geriert*) is represented in it, but how stiff and coarse Louis XIV seems by comparison! " And he added: " How I marvel at the freedom of the women! Wherever there is a court, this will be the effect, yet it is a fine state of affairs; in France alone was it disgusting." The criticisms passed on the close of the last act of *The Valkyrie* by the Bayreuth Club, which was so excellent in other respects, were delicious. Wagner returned home somewhat uncomfortable in his mind and told Frau Cosima what had happened. She herself was thoroughly convinced of the inevitability of such a conclusion and wrote in her diary: " I told Richard that I really cannot understand how people can think of such things, and especially how they can at once find words to express them." " Where ideas are lacking," he said, " a word will occur to the mind at the right time instead. Take, for instance, the word ' sacrilege,' which I have heard twice in a connexion which could not be more stupidly inappropriate. The first time I heard it was during that ghastly period when Mathilde Wesendonck was jealous of my wife, and I proposed to her that I should get a divorce from my wife and she from her husband, and that we should be married. She replied that it would be a sacrilege. For the rest," he added with a smile, " this abstruse word was very nicely suited to my proposal, for unconsciously, in the depths of my heart, I did not mean it seriously." And so they went to look at the new house, and he showed her the place where he wanted the tomb to stand in which the two of them were to rest side by side. This was on a moonlight night, that of March 14, 1873, when Frau Cosima wrote in her diary: " A grave, serene mood, inseparable, united for ever."

Wagner now consulted the burgomaster about constructing a tomb in the garden, at which the excellent Muncker was greatly shocked, " but," as she writes, " Richard explained with what serene calm we look forward to our eternal rest." Thus he observed: " One really ought to hand oneself over to the community, for it is a pleasant memorial if our remains — all that we have in common with everyone — are still united here below in this narrow home." It is wonderful how they both sought to identify themselves with the place, and how Frau Cosima especially entered into the life of the people, though they made a very melancholy impression upon her. In this connexion she wrote to her friend Malwida advising her to bring her Italian maid with her. " The common people in that country," she said, " are, in my opinion, much more amiable and have much more delicacy of feeling than here, where bad governments and a severe climate have led to excessive poverty and misery. We are just now experiencing a particularly shocking example of this in the case of a bookbinder's assistant. The poor, worthy fellow had to travel more than thirty-six miles (*zwölf Stunden*) on foot and nearly died of it. He was ill when he arrived, and was taken to the hospital, which kept him for six weeks, but can do so no longer unless his parish will pay for him. I inquired where he came from and find that Nordhalben is inaccessible and impossible to get at, a wretched, derelict place in the Franconian forest. The boy's father writes gratefully, but very resignedly, that his son is dying; they all have goodness knows how many children and are glad when one of them is ' taken by God.' Now we are hoping, with the aid of our good doctor, to get him back here and so save him; but a glimpse into such misery is terrible. Ah, the only thing that would be any use is to be king, as Frederick the Great was! The burgomaster told me that all the thanks he got from a mother whose child he had rescued from drowning was: ' Nothing kills the likes of us.' The simplest feelings of nature are stifled by want, and in little places of that sort the parsons, officials, and presidents can do nothing to help; meanwhile strikes are increasing, the workmen now want to work no more than eight hours instead of fourteen, and, to make matters worse, the Government has sent down a ministerial decree that measures are to be taken to prevent the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of March 18, 1848. Its only idea is one such as does not occur to anybody among the people."

Day in and day out, indeed, social conditions played a great part in Frau Cosima's life. She could not get rid of the impressions gathered during her walks, the effects of which remained in her mind for a long time. Her ruling passion was pity; thus in connexion with the education of her own daughters she formed the project of establishing a school for girls, together with Malwida, whose idea of moving to Bayreuth was realized, thanks to Frau Cosima's loyal aid and thoughtful preparations. In this connexion, too, her life was permeated by a great conception which, even from the point of view of the development of education alone, must be regarded as of great importance. But all these things were, after all, but side-issues as compared with the great questions of her companionship with the Master and the education of her children. She and the Master surveyed the literature of the whole world, and in the first place, of course, that of Germany. Thus they read what Carlyle wrote about Goethe — the passage, that is, on the evening before his death — and she expressed the opinion that one could see from Carlyle's words how little one really knows about great men, and how shadowy they appear to posterity. " This made me think of these diaries," she adds, " in which I should like to give the children the clearest possible idea of Wagner's nature. That is why I should like to write down every word he says, even about myself, in defiance of all modesty, in order that his picture may live on — but I feel that the attempt is a failure; how am I to reproduce the timbre and sound of his voice, his charm, his judgment, his glances? Yet perhaps it is better than nothing, and so I go blundering on." She was deeply moved by Carlyle's eulogy of Goethe, because it also " applied so absolutely to Richard. The genuineness, the sincerity, the courage, the goodness, the poetry! Richard liked Carlyle, in spite of much that is commonplace in him, and his entirely different culture." But while filled with the atmosphere of spring, she thought of Goethe's death: how at the greeting of spring his life faded away, and how it was in summer-time that he had been born. Her conception of him was original and deep, for the very reason that she lived in constant communion with what was great. She once asked Richard whether, as a young man, he had been much moved by the news of Goethe's death. He said that his uncle had been very excited about it, but that he himself had really not known much about Goethe, and thought he was just one of those people who are always writing (*unter die Vielschreiber geraten*). Schiller, he said, had done Goethe immense harm in his eyes; he had thought *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (*The Elective Affinities*) boring and considered the scenes in *Egmont* in which the populace figured to be mere imitations of Shakspere. " Such is youth! " he added.

But preparations for the Master's birthday had already begun, and her efforts to conceal these from him were characteristic of her. He had, however, an inkling of what was going on, and there is a slight echo of this in their conversations. On her return from the Opera-house one day, where the preparations were being made, he said that on the day before, Cosima had seemed to him like a vision from another planet, like Schiller's *Mädchen aus der Fremde* (maiden from foreign parts). " I told him," she writes, " how deeply Schiller's poem had affected me when I was young, though I could have no idea of its significance. To which he replied: ' Yes, its effect is like that of music, and I, too, remember how deeply it moved me when I read it at the beginning of Schiller's works. Schiller has a gift for the mysteriously pathetic (*des geheimnisvoll Rührenden*).' "

Preparations were advancing for the festivities, to which she had invited all and sundry. She went steadily on with this work, the idea of which was, as it were, to confront the Master with himself in his works as a surprise to him; while at the same time she read Walter Scott with him, shared in the anxieties which increasingly pressed upon him, and combated and silenced the gossip about the King which made its way to Bayreuth and into their quiet home; and more especially the brochure — which may almost be described as dastardly — in which a university lecturer of the name of Puschmann at Munich, possibly commissioned by some personage of importance, examined into the question of whether or no Wagner was mad.

And so the Master's birthday came round, and in the early morning he was greeted with the chorus " *Wach auf, es nahet gen den Tag* (Awake, the day is dawning now)," [1] which roused him from sleep and came as a surprise to him, like everything which took place on that day, and in which all the love and fine taste of his wife were revealed. At the performance in the Opera-house, which was given for the benefit of indigent Bayreuth musicians, the Master heard for the first time the *Concert Overture* (*Konzertouvertüre*) which he had composed in 1831, his *Albumblatt*, and the song "*Träume*," arranged for violin, but, above all, his youthful *New Year's Music* (*Neujahrmusik*) for orchestra and chorus, rearranged by Peter Cornelius as a musical "novel,"[1] and his stepfather Geyer's comedy *The Massacre of the Innocents* (*Der bethlehemitische Kindermord*). Thus she celebrated her husband's sixtieth birthday, in a way that moved him deeply. The part taken in it by the town and by his friends made a deep impression upon him, and he felt indeed like Hans Sachs when he said:

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[1] From *The Mastersingers*, III, v.—Tr.

"*Und soll in Ehren ich besteh'n,*
Sei's, mich von Euch geliebt zu sehn.

(If honour is to be my due,
Be it that I am loved by you.)"

But he had no need of Sachs's resignation; for what was now being offered him was done at the initiative of his "Eva" herself, and in a way which was most touching and gladdening to the heart.

In the mean time they had once more been out upon their travels in order to collect the future cast for Bayreuth, and there had been no lack of incidents. Thus at Leipzig they had had a meeting with her father, which she enjoyed in a way all her own, in spite of the reserve imposed by her husband's jealous eye, and from which she carried away a profound impression. Once more a remarkable change had come over Liszt, and in his relations with his daughter it is always possible to tell when an attack had been directed against her from Rome. Thus everything imaginable had been said in that quarter about the education of the children. The Princess had furthermore alleged that the couple had gone through a second marriage ceremony at Bayreuth, as the first one in the chapel at Triebschen was not valid. It was for this reason, she presumed, that they had arranged for Cosima's conversion to Protestantism. She made other absurd allegations, which naturally had some influence on relations with Hans von Bülow, though it must be said that he did not allow himself to be prejudiced against Frau Cosima by the Princess in the least. She succeeded, indeed, in dissipating all these doubts of her father's, which had naturally wounded her deeply and which he himself had now to admit to be false. But it all cast a gloom over their meeting, and the Master cannot be blamed for his indignation at such a view of their position. In nothing is the sinister role of this malignant woman more plainly evident than in the influence which she exerted over Liszt in opposition to his daughter. Hatred is the only word to apply to it. And this woman, who had denied Liszt the final step after his years of supreme self-sacrifice, now sought some compensation in embittering his visits to Bayreuth; nay, more, in crushing every budding effort on his part to enter into relations with Wagner and his wife. She was utterly unsuccessful in this, but none the less it cast a permanent shadow over their relations, which was, moreover, still further darkened by the jealousy of the Master himself. All through the spring there was a perpetual whispering against Wagner and his wife, and her father listened with anxiety, or rather, perhaps, with anxious curiosity; and Frau Cosima felt that it was really her duty to write to him and, above all, explain the deliberate policy of silence with which they intended to meet all exhibitions of spite.

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[1] An early (Magdeburg) work to which Cornelius supplied a new text in a quasi-"novel" form, the old text being unsuitable to the occasion. See Glasenapp, V, 84.—Tr.

The home life of Wagner and Frau Cosima was in no wise affected by this, and every day brought something new. They hailed the whole springtime as a sort of prelude to the celebrations of May 22, and when the children joyously greeted the song of a blackbird or shouted with delight at a stork on the high chimney-stack, she said: "That means good luck." And then the Master came into the room, singing the Prize Song from *The Mastersingers* and saying in his amiable way: "Well, we have done many nice things together"; to which she replied:

"And you have done many nice things without me." "That was all a poet's dream," he said, "the Muse of Parnassus." And he scolded her lovingly for being too fond of her father, seeing that he had, after all, a much easier time than himself. Her father, he said, had nothing to do but just stand there, and all the women lost their heads. "People like us," he said, "must always be sublime." She felt a certain pain at this; for she clung to her father, and it would have made her happiness complete if she could have overcome the antagonism which always arose between the two the moment they came into contact. But he was sorry, too, for every word that he had said against her father, and did his best to atone for it. "All that one puts into words is foolish," he told her. "A great deal of life must remain inarticulate, like dreams. We are in a state between dreaming and waking, and suffer from this till our union takes place, and there is no more dreaming and waking. It is enough for me if you look into my heart and understand that my complaints arise from the sensitiveness of love, and my only grief is when I feel that your feelings are not at one with mine."

In connexion with this he promised her a composition of quite a peculiar kind, which should in a certain sense form a sombre pendant to the *Idyll*, a foreshadowing of future destiny: the funeral march from *Romeo and Juliet.*

There is a singular contrast between her queenly role as organizer of the birthday festival, in which all Bayreuth had taken the most lively interest, and her own feelings, which sought to withdraw into a more and more narrow sphere. For, as she writes in her diary: "If one does not want to be conscious of the melody of life in oneself, one must get up festivals. It always seems to me as though this were not my province, as though personally I had but one wish: never to be present at such things, but to produce an effect only by a friendly sharing of the burden of life. If I have been carried away by enthusiasm, I feel that I have done wrong—a feeling that is hard to explain; and an invincible melancholy overpowers me, the longing for an existence—in which joy itself is pain."

It was with these feelings that she attended the banquet, and she was glad when in the evening she was left alone with the beloved Master. He played her the *Idyll* and said with a smile: "Perhaps on the whole you had rather that no *Idyll* had ever come into existence, perhaps you would consider that more suitable." But she wrote: "I do not know what I should like, or what I should have wished. That he might be happy, peaceful, and content, and that my wretched ego might never appear to me again in any shape."

The next thing to come between them was the question of going to Weimar for the performance of *Christus*. The Master was greatly upset by the idea, but felt that he could not stay away. Daniela was to accompany them too, by her grandfather's express command. The packing was quickly done, and then, accompanied by Feustel, they travelled by way of Coburg to Weimar, where they arrived in the evening and were given a touching welcome by Liszt. The Master took Lulu to call on his old friend Fräulein Frommann, while Frau Cosima was with her friends Marie Mouchanoff and the Countess Schleinitz. She found her father fatigued and absent-minded. But, outwardly at least, the principal thing was the performance. This took place in the Stadtkirche (city church), for which, as we know, Liszt had to make excuses to the strait-laced Princess, who thought that a Protestant church was no place for this work. But the performance took place and made a singular impression upon Frau Cosima, who remarked: "It is the last oblation of this Latin-Romance world." She and Richard were both enchanted by Liszt's grip of this great work, which he conducted gloriously; and the Master regarded it as in some sort the formulation of a belief in the new order of things ecclesiastical, in the establishment of which faith played no part. She had an infinitely tender feeling for this "highly sophisticated (*unnaive*) composition," in which an inclination towards pomp was displayed in a way which appealed to simple natures, whereas in the Church this principle was no more than a cruel net in which it was intended that such natures should be caught. The work seemed to her thoroughly un-German, only possible to a German temperament if this were prejudiced in its favour by good feeling, but to be performed by a German alone. "Richard," she comments, "passes through every phase of ecstasy, varied by fits of fury, only to arrive at the deepest and most affectionate fair-mindedness." The performance was not good, and Liszt towered like a giant above the indifferent performers, seeming as much out of place as the three of them were at the festivity which took place at the Ressource after the performance. As Frau Cosima says: "I cannot find a word to say amid beer-jugs and stocking-knitting. They are a poor lot, my father said, while the Master said of him that he could only be understood by regarding him as a being genuinely popular in his sympathies and well-disposed to all things German." It is remarkable how in her, too, though educated as a Frenchwoman, it was precisely her German sentiment that found such infinitely affectionate and exalted expression in her attitude towards the work of the father whom she loved so ardently. In his intercourse with her father her husband showed the most wonderful tact in matters artistic. Shortly after her return from Weimar she herself wrote in her amiable way to her friend Frau von Schleinitz, whom she had actually met there: "On the day after my arrival I tried to sum up my very peculiar impressions of the *Christus* and wrote to my father about them." She would gladly, she said, have discussed it with Frau Mimi, too, at Weimar, but their conversation was interrupted by "the apparition of a ghost." We can imagine who this very solid ghost was.

Their journey home was, however, beautiful, thanks, above all, to her feeling that the attitude of the Master towards the work and its creator had been quite the same as her own. "I must thank him from the depths of my soul," she writes, "for having undertaken this expedition. It was only for my sake that he did it." And the journey through the little German towns cheered her spirits. "A deep and ardent love stirs within me for Germany, the only country in which it is possible to live."

And now the old life began again in Bayreuth: "the old troubles, the old discords," but side by side with these the quiet, cosy life together, beautified nearly every evening by some great artistic or literary interest. They first went through Beethoven's later quartets, and the Master said to his wife, who was deeply affected by them: "Yes, the fellow saved us all; for Mozart died too soon, beset with forebodings about himself."

But they looked with alarm at the development of things in the outer world, the strikes and unrest which pervaded the whole Empire. So deep was her impression of these that she asked herself, in thinking about the Empire: " Can anything still be saved? Bismarck is wanting in a sense of its gravity, but it is absurd to expect anything of a man who has achieved such terrible things." There was an amusing struggle over the key of the door into the Hofgarten which made it possible to reach this quiet, green oasis from Wagner's plot of ground. It was a long time before this " grace," which dozens of Bayreuthers already enjoyed, was conceded to the future master of Wahnfried as well. It was only in such petty matters as these that the august majesty of officialdom could display itself in its glory.

Fidi's birthday, which fell this year on Whit Sunday, was touchingly celebrated. When the bells pealed out and the Whitsun chorale went up from the church tower, they thought of the hour when the message came to them: " A son has arrived! " — and fell weeping into each other's arms.

But while the pettifogging of the Court Marshal's office about the key, and the pomposity and malice of the officials, offended her most deeply, she felt more and more at home in the countryside of Bayreuth. As she stood on the Bürgerreuth, she wrote: " The country pleases me more and more; may it become a happy home for the children! It is as though I were no longer really alive, but only dreaming, so devoid am I of any wishes for myself. So long as Richard remains strong and vigorous, I am glad — as for myself, my only aim is to prevent my extreme weariness from leading me to let everything go its own way." For she was too good a housekeeper not to feel great anxiety about the tremendous expenditure upon which the Master absolutely insisted, though mainly with the object of making her home and that of the children as pleasant as possible. He was not deceived in his wonderful optimism, which was in contrast with the marked pessimism of his noble wife.

Next a letter came from the Baroness Meyendorff telling her that Hans von Bülow was staying with her father in Weimar, and her father, too, was able to give her a more than satisfactory account of him. He also wrote her a beautiful letter from Dornburg on Midsummer Day. "Your letter was a sequel to the great delight which you and Wagner gave me in Weimar. You two alone can give it me. It remains a living memory in my soul, like a ray of heavenly benediction. Be assured, my daughter, that your wish is fulfilled to the uttermost, and that nothing will ever cloud the rich and wonderful harmony of our hearts, which are united for all eternity. Let us ignore all the emptiness and baseness of this world and go our own way. Love opens up new heavens to us. 'All that is transient is but a symbol,' says your friend Goethe. It so happens that I am writing to you in a room that he once occupied. I dare to make use of a room which bears the inscription 'Goethe.' He wrote in pencil on the window-sill the words: 'Goethe stayed here from July 7 to September 12.' The same room is adorned with other inscriptions. Today is Midsummer Day, made glorious by Wagner. The notes from the Hymn to St. John are also connected with this day. We are here celebrating the fifty-fifth birthday of 'Herr Sach.'[1] Their Highnesses have done me the signal honour of inviting me to the château of Dornburg, where there is only room for the absolutely essential personnel of the court. This evening Frau Milde and three other artists from the theatre will sing the opera *Erwin und Elmire*, the words being by Goethe and the music by the Duchess Amalie. A piano will act as substitute for the orchestra. The performance will take place in the dining-hall, but will be in costume. You already know that Hans spent three days with me at the Hofgärtnerei. He had a very great success in London, and it will be still greater from the material point of view when he returns there in November. Ullmann says that Hans is now at the height of his fame, both in Europe and in America. I will tell you the details of this plan by word of mouth; it is not to be talked about at present, but will provide capital for my granddaughters."

He was, in fact, in a mood of friendliness and hopefulness as regards Bayreuth which was rare with him, and it must be added that he was quite free from anything that might have influenced him against it, and this gave him the moral strength to do everything for his daughter and son-in-law. His affection for them began, indeed, to become more and more bound up with his artistic aims, thus paralysing the evil and disastrous influence of the Princess. One thing that had contributed to this result in particular was a celebration which he had attended. This was the customary treat, known as the *Richtfest*, given to the builders of the theatre on the completion of the timber-work of the roof. The Master gave Liszt a most hearty invitation to it, which he accepted, this time staying quite ten days in Bayreuth, during which he became fully attuned to the spirit of those whom he loved. He took part in the celebration and did not even shrink from climbing the somewhat unsteady ladder to the scaffolding, where he took his place under the roof beside his daughter and the Master. Frau Cosima gave the following beautiful description of the celebration to her friend Marie von Schleinitz: " The festival was very original and beautiful; from the high scaffolding on which I was standing with my father and the children the reality of the world seemed like a dream, and the artists' dream appeared in its reality. The sight of the workmen and foremen, with the Master in their midst, advancing to the strains of the march from *Tannhäuser*, made a remarkable impression upon me, and as we sang ' Now thank we all our God,' I felt that no victory could cause this solemn hymn to come so straight from my heart as the successful struggle to carry this first position, though it cannot as yet be called a victory! Like a glass which, after being swung through the air in a bold curve, returns unbroken to earth, it was a sign that our work would be imperishable — and the omens were certainly good. Siegfried's sun laughed, and so nothing went wrong and the celebration provided much food for thought to a reflective nature. We missed you greatly and no telegram could have expressed what I had to say to you. After ' Now thank we all our God ' comes ' Thanks be given by all to the good people who came to your aid,' and you know who comes first among these good people in our eyes. It was a real satisfaction to me that my father was able to be present, for we have usually missed him at our festivities. He seemed to be moved by what was going on, and appeared to share my feelings too, though they remained silent and unspoken. He must be in Weimar now — we accompanied him as far as

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[1] The Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar.—Tr.

Bamberg, whence we returned home by way of the Franconian Switzerland. We were glad to give the children this treat at the beginning of the holidays, especially as they had brought home very good reports." It was indeed a beautiful tour, and as Frau Cosima stood in the famous cave at Muggendorf, she could not help thinking of the scene in Nibelheim, where Wotan and Loge go down to outwit Alberich.

A few weeks later "Mother Malwida" carried out her plan and arrived in Bayreuth, where it was her touching intention to end her days. No more sympathetic being could have joined the circle there, and her presence gave an added attraction and charm to their evenings; for she had identified herself with the Master's life-work and was attached to it, as well as to him and Frau Cosima, by ties of the most faithful affection. Thus the following months were filled by her loyal and stimulating presence. Naturally, when the cold season set in, and the bitter east wind swept over the old city of the margraves, whirling away the dead leaves in the garden, joy at her presence was tempered by anxious doubts as to whether her delicate health would be able to bear this severe climate, and this grave fear for her health made them feel by anticipation, long before the end, the pain of parting. She also shared the anxieties which haunted them in connexion with the building of the theatre and were only allayed in the end thanks to the King. A mass of difficulties of course arose as the building progressed, which affected Frau Cosima's mood, too. At a critical moment she offered Feustel her savings — behind the back of her husband — and she always maintained the earnest, but at the same time confident, attitude that had been so finely displayed during the meeting of the delegates. If the Master cast a spell over them all, it was to her that all the delegates bowed in reverence, and her lucid ideas, though communicated only indirectly, exercised the greatest influence. They could, indeed, lead to no results, and all the negotiations that were carried on came to grief owing to the narrow and poverty-stricken conditions in Germany. If the King's guarantee was long in coming, it was the petty and to some extent malicious spirit of his court officials that was responsible for this. It was said that the King was offended, for no better reason than that

Wagner had not composed music for the hymn written to him by Felix Dahn, which was in itself a beautiful and inspired composition. Wagner questioned the King quite honestly and openly on the subject and explained to him that he could not and would not set other people's poems to music, upon which the King gave him the fullest explanation. His sentiments had nothing to do with Wagner's refusal, which he quite understood, but his resentment was originally due to what he had heard from his court officials about the energetic attitude — and language too — of Feustel, who justly considered that, in view of the large sums spent by the Royal Household upon other objects, there must be sufficient funds for Bayreuth as well. Feustel had been chosen as Bavarian Minister of Finance and with justifiable bourgeois pride had refused the portfolio; and his vigorous attitude offended Councillor Düfflipp far more than it did the King, who in the end intervened firmly at the decisive moment with cordial enthusiasm. It must not, indeed, be forgotten that much, if not most, of what happened must be ascribed, not to the King, but to the petty and penurious sentiments of those who, instead of carrying out his will, caused delays which not only did prejudice to the King, but at the same time placed difficulties in the way of the great work of Bayreuth.

Meanwhile Liszt had tried in his own way to interest other courts in Bayreuth, and on meeting Prince Hermann of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, whose acquaintance he had made through his friend Cardinal Hohenlohe, he attempted to do something for the cause and succeeded in inspiring the Princess, in particular, who was a cousin of the Grand Duchess of Baden, with a warm interest in the Bayreuth project. During the previous spring she had met Hans von Bülow and had been present at the performance of *St. Elisabeth* conducted by him. " Her æsthetic judgments," wrote Liszt, " are of the highest order, approximating to those of our exemplary friend Frau von Schleinitz. At table yesterday she proposed to her husband that he should secure a vote of the Reichsrat (Imperial Council) in favour of the theatre at Bayreuth and obtain a patriotic vote, which might expedite the building of the theatre. In reply to this suggestion the Prince described how the Emperor had asked

'Herr Sach' what he could do for the great work. 'Why, I am the protector,' answered 'Herr Sach.' 'Oho,' replied the Emperor, 'you are better situated towards this affair than I am (you get off more cheaply than I do).' I shall take the first opportunity of reporting this conversation to 'Herr Sach,' and I will further make an effort to carry out Frederick the Great's instructions to Benkendorf: to beat up the deserters. During the soirée, by way of entertainment, I read Prince Hohenlohe-Langenburg one or two paragraphs from Wagner's criticisms on Eduard Devrient, in which he is interested in connexion with a special case, and I also lent him the brochure on Bayreuth, dedicated to Frau von Schleinitz, about which he made some very intelligent remarks this morning." It is clear that Frau Cosima had won a new ally for Bayreuth in her father, in spite of her misgivings and the feeling of injury which she often cherished. He also took a great interest in the building of Wahnfried and wanted to make a contribution of his own towards the adornment of the room which was being prepared for him in the new house. On September 12 he wrote as follows: "You are arranging a room for me in your new house. From this day I wish to deposit there the precious treasure which will be the most enviable possession in all the kingdoms of the earth and become your heritage after my death. You saw it at the Altenburg during my years of waiting . . . which are now past. Take it 'on deposit (*en dépôt*)' in my room at your home in Bayreuth, and when I am no longer on earth, see to it that this possession comes into the hands of that one among your children whom you consider most worthy. A letter of Wagner's written twenty years ago, with which I have enclosed the orchestral score of *The Flying Dutchman*, will explain to you how I came into possession of the manuscript of this wonderful work. A few days after I received it, the casket in which it is enclosed was given me by the Princess Wittgenstein. Next spring I hope to see you and the casket with the manuscript again."

Frau Cosima, however, would not accept this gift, which was of course bestowed upon her unconditionally, and returned the scores, thereby hurting her father again, who wrote in reply: "You must certainly be aware that you have caused me pain by sending back the casket. Next spring I will bring it for Siegfried, who will not be so proud as his Frau Mama." He then continued in a friendlier strain: " My hearty thanks for the ninth volume of Wagner's writings and for the '*sommaire*' of Schuré's book. The manner in which Wagner's works are characterized is admirable: *Tannhäuser*, the tragedy of two loves; *Lohengrin*, the tragedy of genius come down upon earth and of the ideal without a history." He goes on to report the arrival of Marie Mouchanoff, who " always brings inspiration and joy with her wherever she stays." But the casket gave him no peace, and the way in which he writes about it to his daughter is highly characteristic: " It took me sixty-six hours, from Wednesday to Saturday morning, to complete my migration from Weimar to Rome. Before leaving I locked up the casket in the cupboard in the first room of my apartment in the Hofgärtnerei; it contains the three scores, two of which are manuscripts and the third an autograph of Wagner's. I have added to the casket a little note of my own which makes it clear that this treasure is yours and is to be handed over to you on my death. Herr Grosse, one of the Grand Duke's musicians, has undertaken to deliver it safely into your hands. But I hope to be able to bring it to you myself next year at Bayreuth, and I herewith repeat most categorically my desire that the casket be kept in the room which you destine for me in your new house. It will be in better keeping there than anywhere else during my lifetime. For I have no house, and you know that even the objects and pictures which I loved are no longer in the Hofgärtnerei, for it is the property of the Grand Duke, who placed it at my disposal and furnished it according to my wishes. Nor have I any dwelling of my own in Pest, either. My old furniture from the Altenburg is still shut up in Weimar, and the new, which they have been good enough to procure me at Pest, will be more than ample for the apartment which I shall occupy on the premises of the Conservatoire. Thus I remain '*toujours en vedette* (always the cynosure of all eyes),' as Frederick the Great said, and as poor in spirit as in worldly possessions."

A spirit of grief, though also of resignation, breathes in these lines, and one sees how this inveterate traveller, who in his youth had wandered about the world full of freshness and joy, finding new sources of inspiration and enthusiasm everywhere, now felt unutterably lonely even in Rome, whither the Princess had brought him. In the same letter he writes about her: " The Princess Wittgenstein is having great trouble with her eyes and has frequent attacks of rheumatism. But her intelligence is lively, her morale good; and she is disposed to be far more conciliatory than I had hoped. We have had long talks about Bayreuth, in the course of which we corrected all the false information about it which has been in circulation, and brought things down to the bed-rock of truth." This, too, was symptomatic. Yet he could not make up his mind to accede to his daughter's wish to take part in the celebration at Pest of the jubilee of his first appearance as a musician fifty years before, about which he writes: " In this case the renunciation costs me a great deal; but I must make up my mind to it, and prefer that you should not come to my jubilee at Pest. From early morning till late at night one is crushed by social duties, and I should only be able to see you in public. I should not like to reproach myself with having caused you such an upset (*dérangement*), for which I have no means of making up to you for the moment. Moreover, you have enough to do at home. Your co-operation at Bayreuth is indispensable to the success of the delegates' meeting of the patrons of the Wagner Theatre. So do not trouble, my dear child, but give me credit for having robbed myself of your presence, and in about ten days' time write a few lines of excuse to our honourable president Monseigneur Haynald. Frau Mouchanoff has promised to come, which will give me great pleasure, and I shall also endeavour to persuade Frau Dönhoff to accept the pressing invitations which she has received. I leave for Vienna tomorrow and shall be in Pest from the 31st onwards."

He went on to tell her that Hans had declined an invitation to become conductor of the court orchestra (*Hofkapellmeister*) at Karlsruhe, and that in the course of November and December he would resume his concerts in England, so that he would hardly be able to appear at the celebration in Pest. " Later on, after his tour in America, I shall ask him again, and more pressingly, if he is willing to support me in my efforts on behalf of the Conservatoire, which it will take a number of years to place on a sound footing. I have told the Princess Wittgenstein your opinion of her book. It gave her great satisfaction to hear that you considered it very clearly written. If you are able to continue reading it, it would please me very much if you would tell me without any reservations your impression of the last two chapters of the Introduction, on the '*Hiérarchies angéliques* (angelic hierarchies),' which occupies a large part of the volume and is one of the most original parts of the work, at the end of which there are some really obscure passages. The *Journal* of October 18 contains a laudatory preliminary article on Daniel Stern's *History of the Rise of the Republic of the Netherlands*. The article is signed Fuxelles, which is the pseudonym of Hillebrand, Madame Laussot's friend, and author of the book *Frankreich und die Franzosen* (*France and the French*), which he dedicated to Hans. . . . Yesterday Frau von Meyendorff sent me a copy of Nietzsche's *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* (*Unseasonable Observations*), which Marie Mouchanoff had given her." We see that the intellectual relations between father and daughter were very active. To the Master's joy, Frau Cosima acceded to her father's wish and did not attend the celebration at Pest.

Meanwhile an event had been celebrated in Bayreuth which left its traces in the Wagner household, too, though in the shape of disillusionment and even wounded feelings. Frau Cosima writes very amusingly on the subject to her friend Frau von Schleinitz: " The son of the German Emperor spent an evening and a forenoon here. As you may imagine, the whole town was agog, and I was surprised at the number of people our place contains. The question was raised whether our theatre was to be illuminated. Since the burgomaster declared that it belonged to the town, which was being festally illuminated, it came out twice, on the arrival of the heir to the throne, in a bright red as of fire-light, only rapidly to fade into darkness. For us the sight was very moving. It seemed to me as though Brünhilde had already hurled her torch into the framework of the world, and the twilight of the gods and the final judgment had already begun. The Prince favoured by the sun of the Hohenzollerns and the good fortune that smiles on that doughty race, visited palaces, opera-house, churches, all that was proper; he passed by the Festival Theatre, and I had to tell myself in silence that the future will be even less kind to our art than the present. Disregarding our wounded feelings, and breathing a sigh at the thought of the King, we rejoiced at the impression of spontaneous jubilation which deservedly greeted the Prince. It will scarcely be possible, I imagine, to loosen the mortar that now binds Germany together, and that is so much gained. We must put up with the fact that this gain brings so little blessing to our small community. After all, our kingdom is not of this world. When Wagner played us some excerpts from *The Twilight of the Gods* recently (Schuré, the Alsatian, who is a patron, was also present), I felt how the treasure of pain sinks ever deeper and deeper, and how no words rise from the depths to the surface now, but clear perception and quiet endurance are all that are possible. Then, when Wagner went on to read us *Parsifal*, that chapter in Schopenhauer came into my head which says how statistics purport to show that when pestilence or war has laid waste the world, more twins and triplets are born than at other times; and it seemed to me that, just as Nature reacts like this in the physical sphere, so she has reacted against the cramping of the German intellect by producing such a genius as Bismarck's. Of course, once Nature has found satisfaction in this way, she does not trouble herself about the attitude towards genius of the common herd, which is, in all probability, the permanent outcome of this cramping process. Thus in Shakspere she rescued the Anglo-Saxon spirit to all eternity. But the Normans remained victorious, the Anglo-Saxon succumbed, and so there remained but one image, though it was indeed a prodigious one, such, perhaps, as a quiet, steady development might never have produced." She goes on to tell of the quiet hours at Bayreuth: "We are glad when evening comes and our noble, accomplished friend [Malwida] joins us in our reading. During the last few days we have been reading Lichtenberg's letters on the English theatre with uncommon interest. This type of acute, delicate, and not over-productive intellect has completely disappeared in Germany, and genius towers alone, with no gradations leading up to it. If only it could create unhindered and not be hampered in its true vocation by unworthy preoccupations."

These preoccupations pressed upon her incessantly, and all sorts of suggestions, some merely foolish, others worse than foolish, were made to her and Frau von Schleinitz. Reverting to the assembly of the delegates, she was of opinion that the prospects were not particularly promising, and that Nietzsche's manifesto (*Mahnruf*) had been too vigorous, hardly calculated to galvanize a dead body into life. "Nor do we mean to regard as dead an enterprise that is hardly born yet," she writes. "If it is fit to live, this expedient is too drastic. . . . And now we are once more living in expectation." She was referring to the King's decision, which was delayed till the beginning of the following year. On the subject of Pest she wrote to her friend Frau von Schleinitz: "There is much gossip in Pest at the present moment. The Archbishop had been good enough to reserve me a place next himself for the whole duration of the festival, and in a certain sense I feel that it is sad that I am not there. My fate, however, is no longer concerned with festivals, except those at which I suffer so much, or have suffered so much by anticipation, that they can scarcely be regarded as festive. My father has been extremely kind to me on this occasion and has understood what I feel. I hope that Marie Mouchanoff — poor thing — is having a few moments of enjoyment there. It is odd how the Catholics, who imagine themselves to be so lucid, have such difficulty in freeing themselves from a material view of things and continue to be so disturbed by it. If anyone dear to me were to die at a distance and something prevented me from going there — whether a sentimental motive or a practical hindrance — my sorrow would remain untroubled by agitation, for I should know the reason. What is a farewell, a last pressure of the hand, in comparison with the longing that draws one towards the place to which the beloved one has departed? What is separation in space compared with the loss of the sight of our dear ones? I did not always feel like this, it is true. On All Souls' Day I took the communion here with a great congregation, perhaps two hundred and fifty in number and mostly peasants, a goodly company, which made me feel that only at the altar is real community established. Like shadows we came and went, without order and yet without disorder, everyone absorbed — some cumbered with life's distress and troubles, and some consumed by life's afflictions. Who can feel any doubt here, where no thought sways us, where no desire awakes, where one's mood would scarcely allow one to pray for the life of a sick child? For all was still, the silence of the universe prevailed; in such a silence one speaks with God. Not only is the much-talked-of equality of rich and poor represented here, but also the equality of good and bad alike in the sphere of severity and pity, of desire and of renunciation; here, where all virtues and all vices are silent, and nowhere else, do we celebrate their union. Peace is about us and in us. Are there any who do not feel it in this way? I hardly think so. To speak of the silence of the soul is presumptuous! God knows how it happened! " This was the proper mood for All Souls' Day and had its origin in a feeling different from that which had dictated the words written to her friend a few weeks previously: " I, too, dear dream-sister," she had said, " often meet you in the fields of night, in which there is at times a pretty medley of happenings. But I should not like this meeting to be a substitute for your visit, though in other cases it may be better for those who love each other to see each other in dreams rather than in stark reality, which does harm rather than unites. But in your case we depend upon this reality, for it seems to me that nothing, neither union nor separation, could ever come between us."

At that time, indeed, this friendship was a consolation to her, thanks not so much to this exceptional woman's energy as to the delicate womanly feeling which she displayed towards her and which was supremely necessary to Frau Cosima, and all the more so since, under stress of her great material anxiety about the idea of the festival and the theatre, her whole nature was becoming more and more introspective. Indeed, the real greatness of both Wagner and his wife was that, the more the outer world weighed upon them — in ways that were anything but beautiful — the more they withdrew into themselves. Her life was spent in an alternation between grief and the most sublime impressions, between longing for death and the feeling that she must live for the sake of the one great idea and the great man, as well as for her love's sake. Then above all did she feel how thankful she ought to be to God. "How much better fate was than myself," she writes, "how lovely was Triebschen, how friendly the King, how beautiful our house! The children are well and good, Fidi full of promise. What do I do to deserve all this? Richard accuses me of a perfect mania for self-sacrifice — but I cannot rid myself of the thought that I have never done enough in life. All I desire now is to wait and to pray." And then she philosophizes about how she would like to die: "begging forgiveness with my whole soul of those whom I have offended, speaking in terms of supreme praise of him whom I love, putting forth all my strength to forgive those who have wished or done me evil, blessing my children, and bequeathing to them the teaching of which I experience the effects in myself at this moment." Then she recovers herself and says: "But now my first task is to hold sacred the life that has brought me such infinite happiness. It is as though Richard's love for me continually increased my own. From it arises the cheerful temper — nay, the merry, exuberant humour that makes it possible for him to endure all vexations." And it reads like a beautiful romance of the age of Goethe when she says: "Our love is for ever growing both deeper and more exalted. We ask ourselves how we ever managed to exist without each other. Blessed memories of Triebschen, of the mornings and evenings there, the 'Räuberpark,' the seclusion from the world, the sheltered existence. Now indeed we are exposed and most conspicuous." Such was their inner life.

From the outer world came the bestowal of the Order of Maximilian upon Wagner, in which the chapter of the order associated him with Brahms, a singular proceeding, but understandable enough at that time in such worthy people; but it hurt Wagner, as did also the stiff and formally official manner in which the President summoned him to the office to receive the decoration — a fresh proof that genius can only find a home, not to speak of understanding, with the prince, but never in the State. Frau Cosima suffered from this more than he did himself; for when he heard that he was associated with Brahms, he wanted to return the order, but she dissuaded him from such a provocative action. How different was the truly artistic *milieu* which they created for themselves! The portrait of Frau Cosima by Lenbach gave him endless pleasure. He hung it up by his work-table and said: " I adore the portrait idolatrously while engaged in instrumentation. If you only knew all that I say to you! " In the same spirit he also commissioned his old Dresden friend Kietz, who had come during the summer to make a bust of him, to model one of Frau Cosima. The excellent Kietz's reminiscences tell us many beautiful things about the sittings, at which he was permitted to see Frau Cosima with her wonderful and almost fabulous hair flowing, and himself to make suggestions as to how she was to arrange it. There were days when the Master himself delighted in the sittings like Goethe's young lover, who, " *sein blondes Liebchen zu erfreuen, verpufft . . . Sonne, Mond und Sterne* (to give his fair-haired darling joy, would lavish sun and moon and stars)." Few things could be more beautiful or charming than the close association of these two unique people — a union of souls which, for all their passion, was infinitely lofty and pure. Every evening when they read together, whether Calderón or Shakspere, Schopenhauer or the writers of the day, their feelings were always at one, and through books, too, they were able to discover a fresh emotion in the unspeakable beauty of two hearts that beat as one. And in all this she did not know whether to rejoice more in his sublime utterances or in the godlike humour which revived in him so soon as he found himself alone with her, cut off from the world and its cares — from such a paltry affair as the creation of the Festival Theatre now inevitably appeared to him. In this lies the greatness of their united destinies, together with something sacred, and an infinitely pleasing charm.

And so Christmas came round, when " Mother Malwida " was naturally their guest and companion, as indeed on most evenings. She had placed Hölderlin's works under the table for Frau Cosima, and she and Wagner were at once able to recognize the remarkable connexion which undoubtedly existed between Hölderlin and Nietzsche, without which one is as little able to understand Friedrich Nietzsche as if one were to ignore his development from Novalis, paradoxical as this may sound. On the very evening of Christmas Day Frau Cosima wrote in her diary: " As I bid farewell to this day, the consciousness of my happiness overwhelms me with resistless force. Richard and I must give praise to the fate that brought us together. I cannot grasp the marvel of being loved by him: my earlier existence seems like a desolate, empty dream. Now I have found everything, and my very suffering is a sign of my happiness." She wrote this as it were in anticipation of her birthday morning, of which she herself gives the following beautiful description: " In the early morning I heard the children singing the great '*Koserosenlied.*' Siegfried recited a poem to me, and I felt the most profound realization of all my happiness. Without, all was silence; within me, all was eloquent, a thousand voices carolled a hymn to love within my soul, just as the thousand birds in spring join in one exultant song. The sun was shining. I begged Richard to take me to the theatre. The entrance to the stage was blocked by boards. There was no watchman there, so I clambered over, in spite of my splendour of velvet and satin, and succeeded amid great laughter in entering the hall forming the stage. A grandiose impression! The whole thing towers up like an Assyrian building, while within it the columns stand in rows like sphinxes, and the wings extend forming mysterious passages. It all suggests the past rather than the future, yet today it produced a grand effect upon me and raised my spirits. From the stage we next proceeded to the auditorium. The effect on entering it is sublime, and will give the spectator in an instant that which no education can give him — a preparation for the mystery. . . . Richard presented me with the orchestral score of the first act of *The Twilight of the Gods.* At dinner he struck up the song '*Sagt mir, Kinder* (Tell me, children).' . . . Before dinner we strolled to the new house and went into the new hot-house, rejoicing in the lovely flowers; a dream of gladness lay over all, and the children were enjoying it. As for us two, the tomb is all we want, for us there would be no possession without discovering each other fully, being all in all to each other and remaining together in life and death. In the evening I asked him to play me the *Idyll.* He recalled that morning at Triebschen, and then the Triebschen period in Munich, with all our ecstasy and woe. We parted, I repressing the outpouring of my emotion by an effort, then laying the *Idyll* and the *Koselied* under my pillow and gently surrendering myself to sleep. A happy day. I am not like Goethe, who longed for but four weeks of happiness; happiness is my life and my lot, existence with its torments, illumined by the Star of the Deep."

But reality next claimed its rights. Worries great and small pressed in upon her in connexion with the theatre. Yet at this time, too, Frau Cosima was to know comfort and help. For this very reason peculiar significance attached to a remark which she made about the Princess Wittgenstein's daughter, about whom she writes: " I perceived how boundlessly good Richard always is from the answer which he gave me when I told him how a being like the Princess Hohenlohe, who had lived through the whole development of the Nibelungen idea and shared in it, was absolutely incapable of saying anything, though it was now that she could do something — indeed, so much. Richard said that she had simply finished with it, that by contracting this marriage she had made her decision and was now as good as dead."

And so the year drew to an end, and, inspired by these ideas, she sent her friend Marie von Schleinitz a description of her birthday, the visit to the theatre and all its other incidents, in the same terms as in her diary. This is a sign of how deeply she was in sympathy with her; for, with this exception, what she wrote in this secret record remained hidden from all the world, even from her husband. " With such thoughts as these," she adds, " I celebrated this most sacred of nights and of days. But soon my cares returned in swarms, and His Bavarian Majesty was silent, and by way of compensation came the Order of Maximilian, of which you have doubtless heard. I begged Wagner to submit to the honour quietly, but I was reminded in this connexion of Falstaff, who says of his tailor: ' I looked a' should have sent me two and twenty yards of satin . . . and a' sends me security ' — we ask for security and receive a decoration. Forgive this bad joke." And she continues, with reference to the building-fund: " If we do not receive the guarantee, Wagner expresses his intention of sending a petition to the Emperor signed by the various patrons, begging him to issue a decree ordering a performance of *The Ring* for the year 1876, as a celebration by the whole of Germany of the peace with France, and setting aside a hundred thousand thalers for this purpose. Do you think such a petition would have a chance of success? At present, of course, the principal thing is that our honoured Emperor should recover his health. His indisposition caused us here much anxiety too. I dread all that may happen in the future." Then she proceeds in her way to discuss the sketches which the Viennese painter Hoffmann had made for the scenery of *The Ring*. "They are really wonderfully beautiful," she wrote, "and Lenbach, whom I asked to go and see them, wrote of them with great satisfaction. They reveal a deep knowledge of nature and a thorough knowledge of the poem, as well as great ability. And, what had seemed to us the most difficult task of all, he has made a magnificent sketch of Valhalla, convincing and yet ghostly, a habitable place of the dead, very remote — even unattainable — yet as firmly delineated as the contours of the clouds. He has had the happy idea of basing his construction on the five hundred portals and of placing the high seats of the gods there, as well as the world-ash and the well of wisdom, which makes the whole thing singularly living. The Wala's crag, too, where Wotan awakens her, was most grandly conceived and in harmony with the music; one or two things were unsatisfactory, but nothing clumsy: and in this respect, too, I am convinced that an unparalleled artistic achievement is coming into being. And only think, Richter maintains that he has discovered Siegfried; he brought us a very handsome, dignified young man, a doctor of laws, who despises the theatre, but has a powerful voice and is ready to dedicate himself to the cause; very musical, besides. The task now is to train him, and Richter has undertaken this! God knows! His voice and appearance are good." And she continues: "I have just been to church, in order to close the old year piously with the children. Now thank we all our God! I hope that I have attained the noble peace for which the hymn prays; then could I give thanks with all my heart. It is indeed wonderful how faith is more and more impregnably confirmed in the soul in a way that passes expression; I have now reached such a point that no symbol, no superstition, can disturb me. I am able to recognize in them all a confirmation of the feeling which inspires me. Not in the sermon, unfortunately, for it is always too clever and is somewhat of a trial to me, for I see the peasant women going to sleep beside me all the time, when I know so well what might be said to them in the shadow of the cross and in remembrance of the Sermon on the Mount." She next goes on to speak of her beloved friend's husband: "How well one can understand that your husband, the Minister, longs more and more for solitude! He must, so it seems to me, be sick at heart of the masquerade of life, which he has every opportunity of knowing so intimately. Wagner wrote to a kinsman recently on the subject of what he called 'malicious callousness'; but I am always struck by people's dull inattention, and a short while ago I remarked in our house that the only workmen with whom I could get on were two deaf-mute painters; the defect which nature has visited upon them compels them to concentrate their whole attention and intelligence upon one when one has anything to say to them, so that they understand and obey, while those who can speak and hear take no notice of anything. Thus I have reached such a pass that I want to associate with cripples! . . .

"Meanwhile the bells have rung in the New Year, and I was interrupted by the candles of New Year's Eve. The children plundered the tree and danced round it, while Wagner played an accompaniment. I love writing to you, dear heart, on this first day of the new year, it is a dear and happy sign that our intercourse will go on as it is. During most of my friendships Brangäne's '*Gebet Acht* (Give heed)!' has rung in my ears, either when they were at their height or just beginning; indeed, whenever anything pleasant happens, I almost always hear this cry within me. But from the first moment of our acquaintance I have had nothing but confidence in you — you yourself may say why this is so. God knows whether '74 will be propitious to us; at times one must arm oneself with renunciation and resolution." In this letter she adds a word about the friend who only remained in Bayreuth for the Christmas holidays, afterwards leaving her refuge there and going south for reasons of health.

The climate of Bayreuth was too severe for Malwida, and her appearance there was a brief but beautiful episode. Not everybody was as strong as this valiant pair, who bore the bitter winds of the Franconian forest in the consciousness that a work and a duty awaited them there. But, for the time being, this duty was a harsh and bitter one, and Wagner worked off his annoyance in the humorous lines:

Da der deutsche Geist nicht will zahlen,
Kann ich Hoffmann nicht lassen mahlen.

(I cannot let our Hoffmann paint away,
Because the German spirit will not pay.)

This was, of course, very painful to her, the more so as her mother's fortune, which she would gladly have placed at his disposal, would not come into her possession in time. But Wagner would not lose courage. " We must be all sorts of things at the same time now," he said to her: " prudent, wise, honest, and dignified. You shall hear *The Ring of the Nibelung* yet, it all comes back to this: that no final term must be fixed. When once the two hundred thousand thalers are there, all will be well." And one evening, " after a stormy day," she herself said to him, " urged by what spirit I myself do not know: ' How beautiful it is, all the same, to be abandoned by everybody! '" To which he replied: " Ah, it is the only situation worthy of us." And she adds: " Yesterday and today I poured out my whole soul in prayer that I might die together with Richard; that I might continue my pilgrimage here below only so long as my glance can meet his glance, my hand hold his hand, my poor intellect live in awe and comprehension of his. But his comment was: ' Provided only that we may yet live a good long time together.' "

In comparison with this, how pitiful seem the delays which were still placed in the way of the granting of the required guarantee from Munich. It was springtime before the King came to a decision. There was talk of his being offended and annoyed, and that ill-fated hymn of Felix Dahn's was for ever being thrust into the foreground, though it had undoubtedly made none but the slightest impression on the King; for it was an out and out glorification of the Emperor William, and we know how far the King's wounded susceptibilities had already alienated him from the Hohenzollerns at that time.

Frau Cosima now spent the best hours of the day in the new hot-house, and the magnificent plants had an unspeakably calming effect upon her. Here she would read, her husband joining her to discuss public affairs and, still more, their own great private interests. There were certainly many " household anxieties of every variety " ; Wagner was only too often in a condition of comical despair, and fresh cares had come to her, too, in connexion with the house. They were equally concerned about the affairs of the outside world, and one is bound to admire the clarity of their political views, and especially the prophetic vision with which he judged the situation in Germany. Just at the time of the elections he told his wife that in Chemnitz they had elected a Socialist who dared not even set foot in the town. And this, he said, was the result of five or six thousand citizens' neglect to record their votes! " Oh, this Parliament! " said Richard; " if I could only talk to Bismarck about it! "

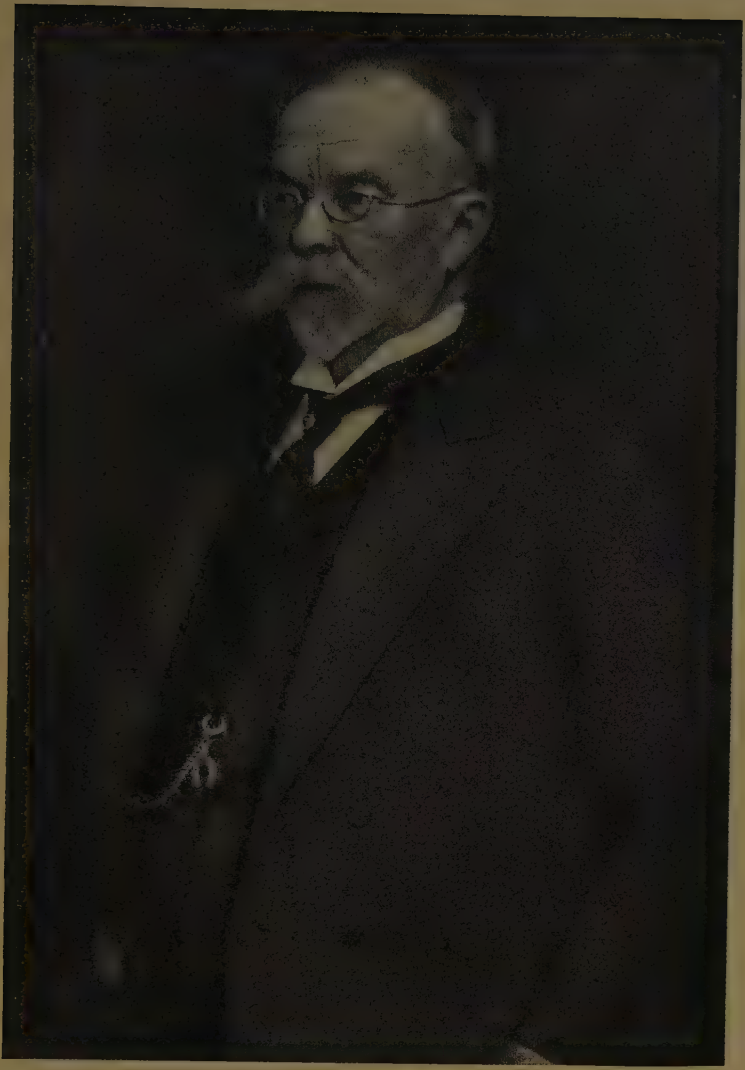
But everything was overshadowed by their deep union of souls. How charming it is when she writes: " We spoke of men, women, and love. I told him that he was the only man who deserved the love of a woman; that he was true and tender and believed in love." To which Wagner replied: " Most men lack composure. That is why they are too cynical." They absorbed themselves in the world of Indian literature, only to discover in it not only themselves, but also the great thoughts that guided him as a man and a creative artist. And the more cares weighed upon him, the more he sought refuge in this realm of love. " You crown me with your mercy," he said, " you are not only the heart of my life, you are the whole world! " And she adds with a sigh: " Alas, and I can do nothing for him."

The whole world was, so to speak, full of alarms, yet all that was required was a stroke of a pen on the part of the unhappy King, or a decisive voice among his entourage to induce him to give this comparatively modest guarantee, for he desired nothing so much as the Master's well-being and the foundation of Bayreuth. And now Frau Cosima wrote to him and sent him pictures of her children. The King's reply was touching, warm, and enthusiastic; everything seemed to be going on as well as possible, yet everything was delayed, and it was this delay that in fact impeded the whole work and, worst of all, hindered the Master in his creative activity. The way in which she preserved her calm and cheerfulness during these dark days is admirable, and most of all the way in which she gave no outward sign of the burden of anxiety that weighed upon her — not even to Marie von Schleinitz, to whom she constantly gave beautiful glimpses of the life they led, so that this wonderful woman remained in regular touch with Wahnfried and felt that a part of Richard Wagner's being was revealing itself in this incessant preoccupation with art and literature.

But during these days of waiting and suspense Frau Cosima's correspondence with her father was of special significance. In her heart she cherished a grudge against him because he was giving concerts for every conceivable object except Bayreuth. It is true that he felt it as a serious rebuke when, on one of these festive occasions, the Vienna Wagner Society presented him with a wreath, and he made no secret of this to his daughter, towards whom his heart turned in proportion as his feeling for the Princess began to change into one of pity. It cannot be said that this represented any heightening of his sensibility, but rather that he magnanimously drew a veil over the terrors in which the Princess was losing herself. Her existence was already a torture to him, and it may be said that every word she wrote him or said to him during his stay in Rome was an obstacle to his artistic perceptions. Thus in the spring of 1874 he began to open his heart to his daughter more and more. He had read a letter from her to his cousin Eduard in which she had expressed herself without reserve on the subject of her beloved father, as a result of which he wrote to her: " Your letter to Cousin Eduard caused me to shed sweet tears, tears which bestow upon one a truly celestial happiness. You are the most lovable nature that I know upon earth! How can I reveal to you the pain which I feel at being unable to see you in the near future? You will have understood why I gave up Weimar. For that reason it is, of course, difficult for me to come to Bayreuth. The obstacle does not, however, seem to me insurmountable, for, when all is said and done, I may consider myself entirely quits with Weimar. But it is a different matter as regards Rome, where my duties in some sort culminate. I say this for your ear alone, dear Cosima, and I disclose the true situation to you without circumlocution. The Princess is physically ill, and even more so morally. It is necessary for her to make certain arrangements about her affairs in Weimar without delay (the sale of a certain number of objects and the storage of a variety of others), and for the prolongation of her stay in Rome, where she has lived for fifteen years on an intolerably provisional footing which has yet more unpleasantnesses in store for her (apart from the robbery to which she is constantly exposed). But it is in the highest degree harassing to her to come to any decisions. She has set her face against them, but I still hope to induce her to arrive at them, not indeed in eight days, but in eight months." In short, a fresh burden was now laid upon him, and, far from his relations with the Princess having brought peace into his life, every day brought fresh torture, for she had become absolutely intolerable, in both word and deed. He himself used to take refuge at the Villa d'Este, where he was at a certain distance from her and could give free rein to the incessant anxiety which he felt about her. For the rest, he was occupied with his French connexions and his anxiety about his daughter's future. In the Countess Charnacé, Frau Cosima's step-sister, he could, indeed recognize a lady of lofty and aristocratic sentiments. But something had to be done, and so he undertook to intervene in these affairs. The opportunity came when his son-in-law Émile Ollivier sent him a copy of a discourse which he had delivered at the Academy and afterwards published under the title *Lamartine*. One can see how he began to draw closer and closer to his daughter and to seek refuge in her love, now that he realized that, since the death of his two other children, she was the most faithful friend left to him, together with Marie Mouchanoff, who, far away in Prague, was struggling against grievous infirmities, and whom everybody, including Frau Cosima herself, recognized to be endowed with a high vocation and worthy to adorn the age of miracles. The Baroness Meyendorff, whose affection for Liszt had for a time caused her to hate Frau Cosima, had to yield to her destiny and accept renunciation. And it is touching in this connexion to see how she clung to the daughter and sought and found understanding from her for her heart-ache at being understood, but not loved, by Liszt. When we compare the fate of Liszt, who was now an old man, with Wahnfried, it makes a sad and profoundly pathetic impression upon us.

Meanwhile, however, the assent of the King had at last been received, and it was no other than Adolf von Gross who announced his decision to Frau Cosima. It is curious how the intervention of this simple yet remarkable man in the destinies of the Wagner household brought an atmosphere of stability and promising development both into it and into the Bayreuth Festival Theatre. This was doubtless due to the fact that not only was he inspired by a feeling of inexhaustible fidelity and kindness, but he also had something which none of the others possessed — a calm, steady clearness of vision in all business matters, which he conducted with the utmost energy, but always in the spirit of a gentleman, and with a chivalry which was recognized by nobody with more loyal gratitude than by Frau Cosima.

Fresh from the effect of the royal decision, which now seemed to remove all obstacles to the further development of Bayreuth, she now wrote to her friend Marie: " The document, duly signed, arrived the day before yesterday, dear friend, and so we have taken a good step forward. The last four months have been rather hard to live through, but I thank God that we were able to endure them, that Wagner went on with his work, and that, in spite of all, melancholy did not gain the upper hand. We have now written to Richter, Betz, and Niemann, and plans have been made for the construction of hotels; for the Blue Salon, beautiful as it is, will hardly provide sufficient accommodation. I have told Marie Mouchanoff about this change for the better, but have not yet heard from her, which really distresses me. I sent Feustel to Marie Dönhoff, after Wagner had given him an introduction to the Count, and he has returned very well content." She next went on to speak of the book with which she was chiefly occupied at the time: " Have you read



ADOLF VON GROSS

Nietzsche's new essay on the advantages and disadvantages of history in life? [1] The beginning is rather difficult, and to follow it easily one must know something about the tendencies of university studies in Germany. Its form, too, is not altogether free from an affectation of classicism (Greek and Roman), yet it seems to me to be very remarkable for its fire, wit, and keen perception of the deficiencies of an age in which — to quote Schopenhauer — philosophy has its origin in chemists' shops and clinics, and the soul is alleged to have its seat in the brain. What touches me particularly in Nietzsche is that, following the example of Wagner and his attitude towards all puffed-up learned corporations, he has arrived at a conception of the nullity of this world and a disgust for it, since which he has broken with it, regardless of his own fate, which makes him appear an utter fool in the sight of the academic hierarchy. While reading this book, Dürer's enigmatic ' Melancolia ' came into my mind. The little, positively lethargic-looking genius who sits beside and above the principal figure is like our present-day science — the old relation between Faust and Wagner, his amanuensis. My father has played for the benefit of highly meritorious institutions, and will do so a few times more. He wrote to me that the wreath presented to him by the Wagner Society in Vienna had caused him real twinges of conscience, for he knew quite well that he could put his fingers to no better use than to dedicate them to the cause. I made no reply; ' When I know nothing, I hold my tongue (*wo ich nix weiss, halt ich's Maul*),' as Kasperl says, ' and when I know too much, I do the same.' "

After complaining of her eyes, which were to cause her much trouble from this time onward, she continued: " I am now rather taken up with preparing Lulu for confirmation; at the present day it is difficult to create and foster a right state of mind, so that it shall bring forth fruit in the life itself. One lives so much in public nowadays, and though I see nothing and hear nothing, I cannot prevent the children from worrying their heads about many things. *The Imitation of Christ,* which has always taken a deep hold of me, seems really meaningless in a world which acts upon the motto '*Écrasez l'infâme*' with systematic unconcern." And then she goes on: "Hans von Bülow wrote to his children from Meiningen. Frau von Heldburg's hospitality made me smile. The world's eddies are very small after all, and one is always coming across the same thing. It is a thoroughly depressing thought to me that islands like those of Robinson Crusoe no longer exist, and that everywhere, except perhaps in Bayreuth, there are well-appointed *pensions*."

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[1] "*Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben,*" part of the *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen.* — Tr.

But now came gloomy news from Warsaw. Marie Mouchanoff had been seized with a serious and painful illness and was in a desperate condition. When Frau von Schleinitz heard of it, she wanted to hurry to Warsaw at once, but Frau Cosima warned her not to do so. "For heaven's sake, do not go, my dear friend," she wrote from Bayreuth. "The mere thought of such a risk makes me tremble. Besides, I am afraid it would alarm Marie to receive such a visit, obviously inspired by the idea that she is dying. Happy, thrice happy, those who devote their lives to the suffering, for they are spared the supreme trial. Bear it with a faithful heart, and not as I do, for I take it badly; but how beautifully calmly and nobly you do everything! I am just moving into our house. The first letter from it is for you, and my first feeling is one of inexpressible sorrow. This will tell you what you are to me, and what life is to us all. I did not write to him — that would have gone against the grain — but to her, and I took great pains to tell her how I love her, without saying how I am suffering on her account. The letter was not happily expressed, and she will not understand it. . . . I begged Mouchanoff to send me a telegram, but up till now I have not received any. It is all so sudden, so desolate, how is one to reconcile oneself to things, save in art and in God, who dwells in the breast and cannot affect anything in the outer world?"

They were just moving into Wahnfried. But at this time other feelings, too, were stirring within her: feelings of joy at her husband's happiness and at the jubilation of the children, who were at last finding a permanent home in this house. It was a great moment, though she was unable to feel it in the same way as they did, and for her all the joy of the move was overshadowed by that deep and great melancholy which was a part of her nature. But on the 28th she wrote: "At last we are moving into the house. It is not finished yet, but we are going in by force. A nice dinner at Feustel's. At 4 o'clock the dining-room was inaugurated by a conference between Herren Hoffmann, Brandt, Brückwald, and the *Verwaltungsrat,* with Herr Brückner from Coburg. Richard told me what a splendid atmosphere had prevailed and how all present had been inspired by a pure devotion to the cause. The house could not have had a more beautiful inauguration. The three little ones, headed by Eva, came and thanked us for their beautiful quarters. Fidi has a room to himself. Moonlight. As I stepped out on the balcony with Richard, we caught sight of the grave and he called the house 'Ultimate Happiness (*Zum letzten Glück*).'" But such joy and contentment flooded his whole being that she, too, was involuntarily carried away by it. The weather, it is true, was unprecedentedly cold, though it was May, but he said that, in spite of all, the end would be beautiful. "Only the springtime of the nations," he said, "brought fair weather from March on uninterruptedly, and, in spite of all follies, it was then that the foundations of Germany's unity were laid. As for myself, I do not believe I should have conceived *The Ring* without this inducement."

Next came a letter from Marie Mouchanoff, about which Frau Cosima writes: "I should like to visit my friend, but scarcely dare to express the wish." Yet during the time that followed, her chief preoccupation, in addition to the anxieties of housekeeping, was with the fate of this wonderfully kind, gifted woman. We know that, in the course of his Russian tour, Hans von Bülow had meanwhile arrived in Warsaw and played to the sick woman from the adjoining room; and that this performance by the artist whom she esteemed and honoured so highly was the last impression in her life, which had been filled and enriched by everything connected with Wagner, Liszt, and Bülow.

When Frau Cosima told her husband that Marie wanted her to come to her, he was in the greatest consternation, and it cost her much time and trouble to efface the impression it had made upon him; for he could not bear to be separated from the joys of house, home, and family. "Who could have told me," he said, " that I should possess so noble and dear a wife in this cosy intimacy? I am shockingly annoyed that I am not fifteen years younger." As he returned to work, he pondered over the name to be given to the house, and an original one now occurred to him. In the course of his tours in the Rhine country he had happened upon a village bearing the name of Wahnfried, near Duisberg, and in memory of this he wanted at first to baptize the house " Wahnfriedheim," in which connexion he said: " In Hesse [this was a mistake] there was a village called Wahnfried, and the juxtaposition of the two words has always produced a mystical effect on me; and just as the poem of Goethe is addressed only to the wise, so only contemplative souls will divine what we mean by it." Such was the origin of the name " Wahnfried (peace in illusion)."

It is curious that one of his first thoughts in the new house was for his symphony. One morning he said to Frau Cosima: " I am really sorry not to be able to show you my symphony. Mendelssohn probably destroyed it, possibly because there were tendencies in it of which he disapproved." We know that from this time onward Frau Cosima was untiring in her efforts to recover the manuscript. The full orchestral score had, indeed, mysteriously disappeared and could not be found; but with loyal and helpful assistance she succeeded in finding the parts, from which the score was reconstructed by Seidl.

On the other hand, their larger establishment was a grave anxiety to Frau Cosima, and she told Richard so quite frankly, as was her way. But his answer was: " I have just got to bear it. Everything will yet come right, for Fidi too, unless it were to happen that another composer of operas superseded me, and my works ceased to be performed. But I do not think this will happen."

We have now arrived at a period, or rather a moment, in the life of this extraordinary woman which enables us to look into the very depths of her being. On the one hand, Bayreuth having now become a sublime reality, *The Twilight of the Gods* was advancing towards completion. Her life was spent in this mighty world of creation, and he too was prodigiously moved by it. The whole vision of the Germanic saga of the gods, as he saw and created it, once more passed before his eyes in all its grandeur and terror. When, under this impression, he looked at the pictures, painted by the King's command, to illustrate *The Ring*, which had just been put up in his house, and gazed upon the scene in which the Wala appears [*Rhinegold*, Scene IV], he, as it were, epitomized his life and work in the following words: "What a strange power that must have been by which Wotan subdued Erda! That is wholly my own conception — I know nothing of Zeus and Gaia. Nor did anything strike me in any other poet — in the way that at times a trait that passes unnoticed by most people occurs to the memory. The night in which Brünhilde was begotten can only be conceived in connexion with the idea of the divine. The glory of subduing this woman in order to learn all things from her is a godlike day." Then, turning from Wotan and the Wala to himself, he said: "No, who would have dreamt that I should ever be sitting with you in such homelike intimacy? Thus all that led to the failure of our efforts in Munich was a good thing. A dread will has overruled matters in this — a will which would not see our love wasted and thwarted, as would have happened had circumstances been propitious; for it knew that such a love does not return, and that full advantage must be taken of it. By dread ways he has led us to union. . . . And this is why I believe that I shall live with you for long years to come. Ah, nobody, not even you yourself, knows how I love you." This thought filled his life. "I ought to be fifteen years younger," he said a short time later, "or, better still, I ought to have found Cosima as a young girl of twenty at the time when I gave up the conductorship at Dresden." She was enchanted and touched by these outbursts of the most ardent emotion — indeed, everything she heard him say during these days came home to her with special force. When he read her the last act of *Julius Cæsar*, she listened with inexpressible emotion, and he himself said jestingly: "Nobody would believe that my wife is weeping over the death of Brutus and Cassius."

Impressions in abundance came to them from the outside world too. Wagner's friend Schott had died at Milan. The news of the political fluctuations in Germany agitated him most deeply and her more especially. Next came the proofs of the biography, when he said to her: " You are my friend. Not only have you become my flesh and blood, but you are the only being in the whole world of whom I can say: ' Here is rest and quiet, here is peace.' " To which she answered: " I should like to be with you on a desert island." " And that is where we really are! " he said. " . . . I am now living a life after death. One must be capable of achieving this. It was what fell to the lot of Haydn, for after Mozart's appearance he was, strictly speaking, dead; yet it was after Mozart's death that he did his best work and enjoyed life most. And how dead the whole world is to me, with Freitag and Gutzkow as celebrities — I am no longer in touch with it. God, when I think of Uncle Adolf! I should have been proud to introduce him to you and say: ' This is the race from which I am descended.' The delicacy and softness of his speech, the noble, liberal cast of his intellect! He was so truly a product of the school of Goethe." And when he glanced at the proofs of the biography, he was amazed at the details recorded, and said that he had only recalled them in order to tell them to her.

Meanwhile Frau Cosima was living another life too, full of pain and torment, which she could only in part disguise from her beloved husband, whose work she was determined that nothing should disturb. This was the suffering and death of Marie Mouchanoff. During these days it became clear that this wonderful woman was also a part of Frau Cosima's life. We obtain a wondrous insight into this both from her diary and, more particularly, from her letters to her friend Frau von Schleinitz, who shared her love and reverence for this exceptional woman. One cannot understand Frau Cosima's spiritual life as a whole unless one knows what she was feeling during the days when this poor woman lay suffering and dying in Warsaw, and after her death. " Just now," she wrote on May 1, " when I had finished my letter to you, I went down into the garden, where I chanced to meet Wagner, who, seeing me so deeply troubled, asked me if I wanted to go to Warsaw. I thanked him from the depths of my heart, saying nothing about the danger of which you spoke, and wrote to Mouchanoff asking him to telegraph to me if Marie wished to see me, or, rather, provided my coming would not alarm and disturb her. No news has come, and I live in a state of perpetual distress." She had no fear of infection and even wrote to her friend: "I am firmly set upon visiting Marie. With me there is really no question of infection. Not only have I visited a woman suffering from that illness, but I nursed her to the end, washed her body, and did all that was necessary. I have been in houses where scarlet fever, measles, or even cholera was raging, and nothing has touched me. My father has telegraphed to me that he is 'highly delighted' at my decision. I am only waiting now for Mouchanoff's summons. He has written to me twice in the mean time, but I do not know whether Marie is being given any messages from me, for I have received none from her. He said he would let me know when my visit would be most convenient. I hear from Frau von Meyendorff that the Countess Cudenhove[1] is there now, which seems to me a very bad sign! Have you any idea how long she may still suffer this agony? There is a woman here who has lain sick of this same disease for nearly a year, suffering the most agonizing pain, and my friend had to endure three months' martyrdom. Can you picture Marie disfigured by illness? I cannot. I see her every night, but radiant and exuberant, chatting with me. After the performance of *Tristan* she wrote to me: 'While listening to *Tristan*, I became convinced that I had never loved or experienced any real emotion, and I am very proud of it.' A melancholy outburst! But things were different, she said, when she met Br. But I do not believe this, and just as light is refracted by passing through water, so her life and character are given a new direction by contact with reality, which is now gripping her in the most terrible way, so that her misery is more than I can fathom. — Out of false solicitude and discretion I have destroyed all her letters and am left without a sign of her, which seems to me most horrible. . . . But I must stop talking and embrace you, which is a consolation to me, though a solemn one."

Next came the Master's birthday, which on this occasion she passed as though in a dream, for she could not help thinking about her friend. That this feeling had its roots, so to speak, in a natural force is evident from a letter which she wrote on Whit Sunday: " For the first time since I came alive, I have had no wish to celebrate May 22; I have not prepared any little presents, or taken any trouble about anything — I myself did not know why. But now I know that this unique day, too, had to be clouded for me, that everything might be fulfilled. About midday they played the *Kaisermarsch* and the Pilgrims' Chorus in the palace gardens — and at that very moment she was passing into the peace of the blest. She had no fear of death and hell. In the evening there was singing for him again in our garden; and on these pinions her soul was wafted to the place where we all long to be. But in order that earthly things might assert their rights, I received the news of her release amid the rejoicings of the people; and when I stole away to sob alone, my grief had as its accompaniment the blare of a march which they struck up on departing. Her soul has gone hence, my pain is still on earth. We had friends staying for another two days, and my sorrow was dumb and buried with her in the grave. Now, like her, it rises again and greets her for ever and ever! 'The soul that longs to scale yon distant height Shrinks back in terror from that awful flight '[1] — but do you think she was afraid? My feeling is that all was well and peaceful with her and that it is only we who torment ourselves with our vain imaginings. I am alone in the house, Wagner has gone for a stroll, the children are out, it is Whit Sunday, our friends have dispersed, and I brood and brood and cannot read the riddle of this our existence. I heard that she had been terribly depressed at Vienna, whether owing to forebodings of death or weariness of life. It was certainly the latter. . . . When darkness falls and I send out my greetings to her, then do I wish to see her. Spirits have no terrors for me, they do not suffer and they wish me no ill. But she does not appear, however I call upon her to return to me. Then, indeed, I see her lying there all pallid, but only indistinctly, and I seek for her glance and her voice, but only broken glimpses reach me. My friend, my friend, provided only one does not become quite incapable of supporting existence any longer! "

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[1] Madame de Mouchanoff's daughter. — Tr.

Yet before writing this she had been spending her days with two persons who were very dear to her — Marie Dönhoff and Lenbach, while at home, too, the beloved Master's birthday had been touchingly celebrated, and he had been delighted with the children's jubilation when they came to give him their wishes early in the morning; as well as with the presence of the young Countess, of whom Cosima said: "Marie Dönhoff is coming, with all her amiability and charm." She played most beautifully in the evening, pouring out, as it were, her whole artist's nature, while Frau Cosima listened, with sorrow slumbering in her soul. Anxiety for Hans von Bülow also occupied Frau Cosima's mind during these days, and her only consolation was the thought that her eldest daughter might one day be a comfort to him. The Master, too, had taken up this idea, and told Daniela how he hoped that under his protection she would grow up to be her father's joy in the future. The child was deeply affected by the idea, and Frau Cosima wrote in her diary: "I thank Richard with all my soul for having brought me to this point. I have been walking with my beloved till this time at night, and he said that all charming women were as nothing; compared with them, I was a primal force — and yet my whole force comes from him." But he, too, sympathized with her in her heavy loss. He read in the paper the sad announcement of the passing of this exceptional woman and asked whether he should write anything about her. But in what style? "Be wise as the serpent and harmless as the dove," she writes; "it would have to be artificial, and that would hamper him. I begged him to do it. But all that is possible now is music, with Beethoven as high priest." It was, indeed, this, so to speak, formal religiosity of the dead lady that prevented him from paying her any public tribute, for he thought of her only in connexion with music, and particularly with his own artistic production. One evening some time later, while the Master was playing through the third act of *Siegfried* with his musicians, she listened with the deepest emotion. "As they played," she writes, "I thought with inexpressible sadness of her who has gone hence. She listened to this music and drank it all in and loved it as no other did. I should so much like Richard to write about her, but I do not like to insist. It would turn his eyes too much towards life, and then how could he create? " She herself thought of writing something and arranged her ideas with a view to putting this into execution, but she could not manage it, though at this moment all her thoughts and feelings were with her friend. Thus on July 25 she again writes to Frau von Schleinitz: " Alwine Frommann writes, dearest friend, that she saw you for a moment at the opera-house. Were you at *Tristan,* then, and does the proud word ' opera-house ' mean the Weimar theatre? If you were at *Tristan,* you will perhaps have felt the aching grief which throbs within me now when I listen to Wagner's music. As I hear it, Marie's death becomes a reality to me, something sudden as the stab of a dagger, while my intelligence repeats to itself: ' Yes, it is really true, she is no more! ' A strange and singular feeling. I should never have believed that it would be this art of all others, which looses all bonds and delivers one from all pain, that would thus bring home to me the consciousness of my loss, and it is sad indeed that this should be so. But we can do nothing to change this and must keep a firm hold on our self-control while our reason fails to grasp the reason why (*vor dem Unfasslichen uns selbst fassen*). During one of our musical evenings I conjured up in imagination a complete vision of her whose being, thus dissolved in sorrow, passed in music through my soul. On the next day I wanted to write it down, but was incapable of putting it into shape for publication and gave it up. There are those who deplore this silence over her grave, but to me it seems the only thing worthy of her, till much shall come to light at some far distant day."

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[1] *Tannhäuser*, III, ii.—TR.

At the same time, however, she rejoiced in those who were still alive, and above all in her charming friend Marie Dönhoff, over whom she watched, while disclaiming all anxiety, for, as she says: " I really consider her incapable of unhappiness; for she possesses a naïveté which has something of the antique world about it — something entirely un-Christian. Wagner read us *Parsifal.* I do not know how far the little pagan was capable of any deep understanding of the problems presented in it, but her imagination grasps everything vividly, and it always repays one to impart one's thoughts to her. She delights me like a consummate natural work of art, and her apparent irresolution is governed by the steadiest and most inflexible line of inevitability. Her lot is not, perhaps, an enviable one, but her nature is supremely so!"

But outward circumstances allowed her no time to linger over these thoughts. The singers arrived, and not only did a considerable part of the testing fall to her share, but she also had to conduct the correspondence with them, a task which was by no means an easy one. If she had still stood in need of an apprenticeship, in view of her remarkable activities in Bayreuth at a later date, she would have received a thorough schooling at this time; for the most important singers of the time appeared, chief among them Betz and Frau Materna, and she was perfectly competent to distinguish between intrinsic capacity and outward appearance. On the whole, in spite of many criticisms which had to be made, she was highly satisfied with the goodwill and achievements of the performers, her comment being that "the spirit only was weak." Side by side with this, her correspondence is full of the works of another friend — Lenbach, about whom she expresses herself most warmly and touchingly. It is easy to see what great importance she attributed to him and what joy was caused by his works, in which Frau Marie Dönhoff also took a great and deep interest. It was at this time that Marie von Schleinitz had started a most successful raffle of pictures, which had brought in a valuable contribution to the Bayreuth fund during the very darkest days. Menzel had also contributed some sketches to this collection, and these, with Lenbach's, must be regarded as the most precious of those wonderful artistic gifts which threw everything else that was done for Bayreuth at that time into the shade.

In writing to her friend Frau von Schleinitz about the books which she had to read and did read — her criticisms on which have a charm, a lucidity, an acuteness, and a piquancy which show how apposite was her every word — she makes the following remarks: "For some time past I have become decidedly fonder of pictures than of books. I was very glad to hear that Lenbach's portrait of the Emperor had made so good an impression even as far afield as Italy. You will score yet another triumph with this works of yours, and for the present the chief thing is that it is just like you. At the performance of *The Mastersingers* in Munich Tausig said to me that you have a characteristic gift for always doing the right thing and never committing an error of taste. You would never be content with anything mediocre, he said, nor pass over anything of importance unnoticed. I think a great deal about Tausig just now, through the medium of Lenbach, and my thoughts of both alike are sad, of the former as though he were still suffering upon earth, and of the latter as though he were no longer here to spare our dreaming imagination all partings." Menzel had painted an enchanting "Intermezzo," in which Frau von Schleinitz herself played the principal part, and this picture, of which her friend had sent her a photograph, gave Frau Cosima particular pleasure; for in it the thoughtful and lovable nature indicated by Tausig was brought out in a wonderful way.

Thus Frau Cosima was intensely interested in this raffle of pictures, which was quite in keeping with Frau von Schleinitz's delicate and high-minded sentiments. During her stay in Dresden, where she had gone to make arrangements for sending her daughter to school, Frau Cosima had called on the Wesendonck family — thus completing the trilogy, as it were, with a little satiric drama. The husband had been to Bayreuth that year, where Wagner had received him very cordially and expressed the opinion that one who had always taken such an interest in his fate would rejoice to see him so happy; and the excellent man had been deeply moved by this. Frau Cosima now called Frau Wesendonck's attention to the raffle. "I have written to Frau Wesendonck about your sale," she wrote, "always on the assumption that the elephants have at last finished feeling their way. At the same time I told her that when next she goes to Berlin, I will give her a line to you. The sympathy which she once showed for Wagner, and the interest which she inspired in him, form the basis of my relation with her and are a warning notice to people not to sit in judgment. You will tell me what you think about it, I believe that you may be reckoned among those who can enter into others' feelings." The "elephants feeling their way" was a reference to a humorous remark of the Master's, to the effect that the Wesendoncks behaved like elephants, which, before stepping on to a bridge, first stamp on it several times to see if it is strong enough to bear them; and he went on to wonder, with a laugh, whether the Wesendoncks considered the Bayreuth bridge firm enough.

Meanwhile he was getting on with the orchestral score, which stirred him to the depths of his being and caused him much thought and anxiety; for, since he could not hear it on the orchestra, he frequently asked himself whether he was using too many instruments. In this connexion he took a survey of his past and of his earlier work, harking back to his Dresden period and recalling how he had read Shakspere while still a child; for a kind lady had placed her well-stocked library at his disposal, and he had rushed off with Shakspere to the little wood of Blasewitz to read there alone. The whole thing had seemed to him "superhuman (*dämonisch*)," even such a character as Falstaff. It was this same lady who in after days made the first pregnant remark to him about *Tannhäuser;* that is, that in the overture to it was to be found the whole destiny of the universe. "Upon which," writes Frau Cosima, "he remarked that if I considered in what common surroundings he had lived at that time, I should understand the indelible impression which these words had made upon him." But often, too, he was melancholy and asked himself and her for whom he was writing. Liszt and Bülow and Schnorr, he said, had showed a better appreciation of his works than anyone else in the world.

But the outside world exerted a powerful influence upon them too. When, on July 13, news arrived of the attempt on Bismarck's life, they were deeply affected. "It almost seems like a piece of good luck," writes Frau Cosima, "that a star shines upon the German Empire. I observed to Richard that greetings and friendly advances from the King to us almost always coincided with friendly impulses on his part towards united Germany. So, too, the granting of the credit had coincided with the telegram to Bismarck, and now the royal message to us arrived simultaneously with his resolution to go to meet the Emperor and bid him welcome." And so it was with all other questions. When visitors from Alsace spoke of the territory regained by Germany as not destined to remain long in her hands, he repudiated the very idea, saying: " Do not let us trouble ourselves with such questions, but let everyone do his duty in his own sphere." Indeed, at that time, as always, Wahnfried was the scene, not only of the most essentially German creative work, but also of the best German sentiments.

In comparison with this it was a small matter that just at this time the newspapers thought to deal a crowning blow at the Bayreuth festival by insisting that the singers were being exploited there, and, above all, that Frau Cosima offended them by her arrogance and contempt for them all as a class; upon which she comments: " Most contemptible. And they are always dragging me in. In God's name, why? " But nothing could please these people, and they had never done carping publicly, even at the inscription on the house, which ran:

Hier, wo mein Wähnen Frieden fand,
' Wahnfried ' — sei dieses Haus von mir benannt.

(Here, where my dreams found peace — let me name
this house ' peace in dreams.')

The reason for this was that one paltry reporter had misread it, substituting " *Wahn*," (delusion, madness) for " *Wähnen* " (to think, imagine).

It was at this time that Frau Cosima took up an old book again that she had once given to the young Countess Schleinitz, Eugénie de Guérin's *Journals*, an old favourite of hers. " Could anyone," she writes, " conceive of two more opposite vocations than mine and hers? Yet no being is so intimately my friend as this Breton girl, and I have a great affection for what is French in this book." Indeed, she needed something of this sort, amid the constant unrest that prevailed in Wahnfried. Singers came and went; and none made such an impression on her as Hill; indeed, at the very first bars that she had heard him sing in Schwerin, she had said to her husband: " This is the most important of them all "; and her fine flair for an artist was now again displayed. She was certainly able to appreciate the excellencies of Betz, and though she felt in many ways repelled by Niemann, she saw to it that justice was done to him, and to Scaria too, uncultivated and coarse-fibred as this singer was when he came to Wahnfried. But her capacity to appreciate the true spirit and true art is shown by what she says of Hill: " An unusually rich nature," she wrote; " great fire; in short, all the qualities that Richard requires. He complains of Prussia and the Prussian court and of how, after he had sung some of Schumann's songs there, the German Empress came up to him and asked him: ' Do you not sing any of Reinecke's songs? ' He sang us excerpts from *Lohengrin* and *The Flying Dutchman* and told us that the court of Schwerin is kindly disposed towards both Richard and me, and many other things besides." And so there was much discussion of art and artists in his presence, the Master, for instance, talking of the position of the artist in the world, and of his absent-mindedness where material things are concerned. And he described how once, when he was out for a walk with Dr. Wille and Herwegh, he had got so tired that he begged them to leave him at a certain spot and go on without him. Whereupon Dr. Wille, wrongly supposing this to be due to mere laziness, slapped him on the back with characteristic roughness and urged him on. Richard's fury found vent in a coarse oath, and it was during this scene that the idea came to him for Loge's apostrophe to the Rhine-maidens — both words and music. " Yes, how things occur to one! When I sit down to the piano, it is only to recall things, nothing new occurs to me there, I am trying to find the ideas that have come into my head, sometimes at the most annoying moments. It used to enrage Minna when, during the most fearful scenes that she made, I remained calm because some idea had occurred to me for *Tristan* or *The Valkyrie*." And she added: " Richard believes that in anger a man's powers are keyed up to a high tension, and that at such times his most essential nature is stirred, even under the most irrational conditions. It is only for the carrying out of his ideas that he needs quiet and a certain degree of comfort. Artistic work demands this; but inspiration laughs at deprivations and well-being alike. He reminded me how he had not been satisfied with the quintet in *The Mastersingers*, but how while he was engaged in the composition, I begged him to retain it, till in the end he did really find that it was the right idea. Composition consists in searching for the ideas that occur to one, God knows how and when."

Next arrived Richter and Materna, with the latter of whom they were extraordinarily pleased, Frau Cosima writing in her diary on August 3: " Frau Materna and her husband. ' Brünhilde.' May God grant his blessing." Two days later a note was handed in at Wahnfried in which Nietzsche announced that he was lying ill at the " Sonne." The Master at once hurried to the hotel and brought him back to the house, where he soon recovered, and they passed a merry evening together. " But what he tells us about academic society horrifies us. As usual, he had much to say about the articles in the *Neue Freie Presse* and the like and also talked about Du Bois Reymond, who in a *Discourse on the German Language* had set up Lessing in opposition to Goethe and characterized Goethe as in some sense an evil for the German people." But it was just now that a most fateful event took place. For the very reason that he was " musical," or thought himself to be so, Nietzsche showed that he had no feeling for the Master's art. He brought Brahms's *Triumphlied* with him. The Master saw it and at the very sight of it laughed at the idea of the word " *Gerechtigkeit* " (justice) being set to music. But Nietzsche never rested until the piece was played through, to the general horror of the Master and Frau Cosima. Her comment on the incident is: " Greatly shocked at the poverty of this composition, belauded by Friedrich Nietzsche. ' Handel, Mendelssohn, and Schumann swaddled in leather,' said Richard, who got very nasty and spoke of how he longed to find anything in the way of music; also of the superiority of the *Christus*, where at least there was a feeling after form (*Gestaltungstrieb*), and a conception." Indeed, we can imagine nothing more absurd than to bring the Master this work of Brahms, just when he was wrestling with the last great scenes of his stupendous drama. Thus Nietzsche was already causing him many a trying hour, most of all when he declared that he found no pleasure in the German language and preferred to speak Latin. This was indeed an expression of the doctrinaire and academic element in him, which was in entire contrast with Wagner and troubled Frau Cosima very much, for she clung with extraordinary tenacity to this friendship of the Master's with Nietzsche and was pained by the inward antagonisms which were now coming to light.

To this was added another trouble. She received a letter from her father which revealed to her how utterly shattered Bülow was: his nerves were over-excited, he had lost both his memory and his strength, his cure at Salzungen had done him no good, and he was in a state of the utmost exhaustion; and she writes: "I battle with my mood and stifle the echoes as well as I can." She thought of inviting Hans to visit the children at Bayreuth; but she felt that just at that time it was an impossibility, for the Master was pressing more and more towards the conclusion of *The Twilight of the Gods.* He was suffering from the profound agitation caused by the conclusion of his work, in which everything was concentrated, the whole composition culminating in a blending of all the motives, and the whole thing striving towards absolutely unprecedented means of expression. But all the time he was in a state of the utmost cheerfulness, and found pleasure in Boieldieu's *Dame blanche* (*White Lady*) and Isouard's charming opera *Cendrillon.* He recalled how he had once heard an old woman sing an air out of it at Meudon, where he was writing *The Flying Dutchman.* But the starting-point of everything was his extraordinary delight in his wife and home; and those who came and saw their whole manner of life were obliged to say that those who lived here were happy. None of the cares which knocked at the door of Wahnfried day by day could alter this. The Master lived for his work, and when he spoke of it, he did so in words which Frau Cosima treasured in her heart of hearts, and which revealed to her the whole greatness of his creative genius. For the wonderful thing about her life is that she watched this work growing, so to speak, bar by bar. Nobody could learn as Frau Cosima did to know his method of work, and the union in him of the power of genius with conscious creation. And it was she who in his hours of leisure met him in the most friendly and joyous way, suppressing all her anxieties and, without a word to him, unquestioningly sacrificing her small savings — in short, living at his side and ordering his life in the noblest possible way.

Every day, too, there was something to say about the politics of the Empire and about external conditions, among which those in Munich affected her most deeply; for the news of the King was in the highest degree alarming. It was rumoured that he was only waiting for the performances in Bayreuth before establishing a regency and setting out on a journey to India. "Singularly enough," she writes in her diary, "this news coincided with the King's request to Richard to let him know the exact year and day of the performances." They were both greatly upset and profoundly affected. It is characteristic, however, that in these days of the greatest excitement they could both find pleasure in so sober a book as Xenophon's *Anabasis*, about which she writes: "It is as though one were looking into a pure atmosphere, and Wagner commended the naïveté, the total disregard of effect. How stilted and colourless by comparison are our present historians!"

But the interest which they both took in the work of the General Staff,[1] which was now in course of publication, is really wonderful. The Master felt himself to be a thorough strategist. He could not praise Moltke enough and regarded strategy as one of the supreme achievements of the human intellect. There can be no question that this work, appearing as it did while he was completing the instrumentation of *The Twilight of the Gods*, had an extremely stimulating effect upon him.

But the drama was approaching completion more rapidly than Frau Cosima suspected; for he talked of requiring a long time to complete this "terrible" task, and said that the whole undertaking was positively overwhelming him. But he was eager to complete it. How singular that, during these very days when he was nearing the completion of his work, he should have said that Germany really possessed nothing save her army, and that, on watching the regimental manœuvres, he should remark that here alone was rhythm to be found and work rhythmically carried out. And so November 21 came round — the day upon which *The Twilight of the Gods* was completed. But, strange to say, it brought with it a painful falling out. "Thrice holy, memorable day!" writes Frau Cosima. "Towards midday Richard called up to me to bring him the newspapers. As he had complained to me yesterday of being overstrained and assured me that he would not have finished before Sunday, I thought that he was too tired to go on working. I timidly avoided the subject, and, in order to distract him, I tossed him over the letter I had just received from my father, thinking that it spoke kindly of our journey to Pest. The bell rang for dinner; I met him reading the letter; he asked for an explanation, I told him what answer I thought of sending and intentionally avoided looking at the manuscript of the score, so as not to wound him. He was hurt and told me that it was finished, saying bitterly: when a letter of Father's came, all sympathy for him vanished. During the midday meal I concealed my suffering, but when Richard repeated his harsh complaints later, I could not help bursting into bitter tears, and I am still weeping as I write this. And so I have been robbed of this supreme joy, but not by the stirring of any bad motives within me. The fact that I have dedicated my life to this work in suffering has not won me the right to celebrate its completion with joy. And so I celebrate it with pain, I consecrate this exalted, wonderful work with my tears and thank the eternal God who has laid upon me the burden of being the first to expiate this completion by my suffering. To whom can I tell my pain, to whom lament it? With Richard I can only keep silence. I will confide it to these pages, they may teach my Siegfried to cherish no anger, no hatred, but boundless pity for that most pitiful of creatures, man. And so I rejoice in my pain and fold my hands in gratitude! It was nothing evil that brought it upon me, and the only support left to me is to accept it with my whole heart, without railing against my fate, without reproaching anybody. May all my sufferings be ineffably swallowed up in this one! The children saw me weeping and wept with me, but they were soon comforted. Richard went to bed with a last bitter remark, I felt after some chords from *Tristan* on the piano, but every theme is too poignant for my mood, and I can only sink back into myself, pray, and worship! How could I spend this day in a more hallowed way? How can I do otherwise then meditate on the annihilation of every impulse towards personal existence? Hail to thee, day of achievement, hail to thee, day of fulfilment! If genius be destined to end its flight at these sublime altitudes, what can a wretched woman do? She can but suffer in love and rapture."

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[1] The official history of the Franco-Prussian War. — Tr.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST FESTIVAL PERFORMANCES

THE LETTER which had so profoundly agitated the Master ran as follows:

" My beloved daughter! It pains me to be so little with you and so seldom at hand to help you. Would that this rigour of my destiny might at last be relaxed. Your letter from Dresden, the score, and Wagner's quatrain duly reached my hands on the morning of October 22. I shed tears over them and uttered a prayer that we might soon be singing together the song that Wagner and I sang in the old days among the Swiss mountains:

From olden times, when yet the eagles sang
And sacred waters from the mountains sprang.

We are eagles indeed, and the sacred springs are flowing.

" When are you to be in Vienna and Pest? Are you coming in carnival time? Frau von Meyendorff causes me some uneasiness in this connexion, and I have a variety of reasons for preferring to remain here as long as possible. For the present I have let my friends in Pest know that I shall not arrive there before Lent. Let me know what your arrangements are, and I will fit in with them. The papers are attributing all sorts of things to me. What does it matter? Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Will there be any alleviation of mine? As regards practical matters, I will report to you in July, when the Princess Wittgenstein has been to Weimar to wind up her affairs there and decide about the disposal of her extensive and valuable property. Rome must naturally continue to be the Princess's place of residence. But before she returns there, she will have to take a cure at one of the German watering-places or at some other place that may offer a prospect of recovery. Herr 'Sach,' whom I saw recently in Florence towards the end of October, even now refuses to understand and grasp the fact that his capital (*Residenz*) does not represent God's salvation to me. However, he always manages to use a few flattering expressions, purporting to express his feelings, and I cannot do otherwise than reciprocate them by my warm and respectful devotion, without being too idiotic (*ohne Kretinismus*). A certain Mr. Somebody, who is most certainly no idiot (*Kretin*), but a capable man of business, has inflicted a biography of me upon you. How stupid and brutal! — Since I am in friendly relations with him in connexion with musical business — he is publishing Longfellow's *Bells*, besides the full score of the Hungarian Rhapsodies and an arrangement of them for piano duet — I am careful to say nothing angry to him in writing, and reserve to myself the right of doing so by word of mouth. Dismiss such things from your minds. Great people are really the worst Jews, and Jews are the worst great gentlemen. Let us turn straight to Émile Ollivier, who has been staying in Rome from October 15 to November 5 with his wife, a well-educated person and a personality who counts. I discussed with Ollivier Daniel Stern's attack on you, my dear daughter, and recommended him to try to obtain some redress for you by setting bounds to Daniel Stern's inordinate phrase-making and recalling her to an elementary sense of her duty. I embrace you with my whole heart and soul. Franz Liszt."

This letter should really have afforded no occasion for the distressing scene which left Frau Cosima's nerves quivering for a long time to come. Yet on December 3 she writes in her diary: "Since that day (November 21) I have been unable to make any more entries in my diary, I was too upset. In the evening, when I had finished writing, Richard came and took me in his arms and said that we loved each other too passionately; that was the cause of our sufferings. And then on the 22nd we really celebrated the completion of the work." But Cosima arrived at a party in Adolf Gross's house with her eyes red with tears. Meanwhile she had immediately sent word to her father about the concert at Pest and received another letter from him, which reveals the depths of his devotion for Wagner as a musician: "Whether I am to take part in it as a musician or not depends entirely upon your goodwill. But in settling this, just bear one thing in mind. My passionate admiration for Wagner involves a due modesty with regard to myself. I am happy to recognize in him the divinely inspired Master and to hold it an honour to follow him as a convinced and deeply devoted disciple. And so the idea of a Wagner-Liszt concert, as launched by the newspapers, offers some difficulties for me, and the carrying out of it would occasion more troubles than one. Let us discuss it in Pest, all three of us together — that is, a trinity in unity." And a further letter runs: "I have still something to add, my dear child. In spite of the careful choice of your words, your letter gives me complete assurance, and I feel very silly at not having recognized the kindness of Wagner's intentions, which related to a repetition of the concert which we gave at Saint-Gall, 'in the days when the eagles sang.' For the rest, the surprising news in the papers did not excite me in the least, for they spoke of solos on the piano, and my ten fingers could indeed find no better occupation. But in this world here below it is often very difficult to discover the connexion between natural things. I hope it will make itself plain at Pest, and I hereby notify you that *The Bells*[1] is all in readiness, and we will then settle where we are to start ringing them. Tell me frankly whether the month of February would really cause you any inconvenience. Richter will make the detailed arrangements that are necessary, and I will entrust him with the rehearsals of my *opusculum*. Have you made definite arrangements about Vienna yet? I should be so glad to see you there. Will this be possible? At any rate, I will be sure to meet you at Pest, where we shall have an opportunity of discussing all the serious business of life. Tell Wagner how delighted I am at the glorious completion of *The Twilight of the Gods*."

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[1] A setting by Liszt of Longfellow's *Bells of Strassburg Cathedral*, for baritone solo, chorus, and orchestra. — Tr.

Thus the daughter had tactfully prepared her father, at least, for the impending meeting and their joint enterprise. But at Bayreuth, too, everything was done that was necessary to the prestige of the house. On November 25 there was a great party at Wahnfried, including the whole official world of Bayreuth, at which Josef Rubinstein took part as pianist, while Frau Grün, from Coburg, enchanted the guests by her singing. It was at the same time a festival of remembrance of the understanding at which they had first arrived fourteen years before. Next followed an expedition by Wagner and his whole family to Coburg, to inspect the new scenery there. It produced a fine impression, and Wagner and his wife were greatly pleased with the setting for the second act of *The Valkyrie*, which was already completed, Wagner remarking: " How clearly this brings my folly back to me! " In the evening they took the children to see an innocent piece, *Der Registrator auf Reisen* (*The Registrar on Tour*), and on the next morning they went over the castle. As they were standing in the room which was so beautifully panelled by an artist during the Thirty Years' War, the Master remarked: " What is German? This is "; and Frau Cosima was in ecstasies over this wonderful castle, justly observing that she liked it better than the Wartburg.

It is curious how every vicissitude of German politics left a trace at Wahnfried and caused them both violent excitement. Those were the days when Bismarck was faced with a formidable opposition in Parliament. The Master was vexed at this and wanted to write and tell him that, since he had committed the great folly of calling this Parliament into being, he might at least rob it of its power by ceasing to go down to it and make excited replies to the malicious remarks of Herr Jörg and Herr Windthorst. " It cuts one to the heart," he said, " that such a man as he is should turn white with rage while answering such pitiable, heartless creatures and then refer to his conversation with Kullmann."[1] Indeed, they were both essentially distinguished by a strong political sense, which formed a far more powerful bond between them and the profane world than those of the musical and literary productions of the day which came beneath their notice. Thus she comments on another occasion: "We had a long talk about Bismarck, who actually laid Kullmann's pistol on the table at an evening party. This lapse from dignity on the part of the man whom we admire and honour and who has rendered such services causes us real pain. What a use his crafty enemies will be able to make of it!" At the same time they plunged deep into philosophy and music, into Schopenhauer and Beethoven respectively. When Rubinstein played the A major Sonata (op. 110) and the Thirty-three Variations, Frau Cosima made the beautiful observation that after listening to the Beethoven sonata she had felt as though Beethoven had been grasping at all possible means — recitative, *fugato,* Italian *canto,* figure-writing — in order to express a something that possesses him, of which the music itself is no more than a symbol. "And this seems to me to be the important point: whether a man has this something in him which really defies expression; and not whether he invents melodies, or is capable of playing with forms. And it must be the same with philosophy. It can solve an enigma, but the point is whether the philosopher is really feeling the enigma in himself. Schopenhauer did succeed in doing this." The Master would often talk about his new orchestral works and asked his wife what name he should give them; to which she replied: "*Schwankende Gestalten* (Hovering Forms)" [in allusion to the opening verse of the Dedication to Goethe's *Faust*]. He agreed, saying that he would place the first verse of the Dedication at the head of them as a motto. "And when I said that what came after was applicable to the Nibelungs — '*Mein Leid ertönt der unbekannten Menge, Ihr Beifall selber macht mich bang* (I bring the unknown multitude my treasures; their very plaudits give my heart a pang)'[1] — he said: 'Oh, no, I raise my song to you and to nobody else.'" And he continued to initiate his wife more and more deeply into Schopenhauer, though he had once advised her not to read him. But who could have been more ripe for such reading than she was now?

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[1] His would-be assassin.—Tr.

He had to go to Leipzig to find a singer to take the part of Sieglinde. She found her loneliness very hard to bear, and her husband's fruitless journey no less so, besides the fact that he brought back a gloomy impression of his native city: " One walks about one's own birthplace as though it were an absolutely foreign land," he said; " the old people are withered, and the young ones have no life in them." He had had a general impression of ghostliness. It seemed as though they had both got to cut themselves off entirely from the world, as though only thus could the Master's strength suffice for his creative work and artistic genius. But he was not suffered to do so. And it was better thus.

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[1] Bayard Taylor's translation.—Tr.

Christmas now came round again. Frau Cosima dressed the tree, and as she stood at the top of the step-ladder, the " *Nibelungenkanzlei* " handed the glittering adornments up to her. Richard sat by, reading her Gfrörer's book, which had the greatest fascination for him at that moment, when he was preparing to write the libretto for *Parsifal.* On the next day she was busy arranging the presents from early in the morning till late in the afternoon and had not finished till five o'clock. The next thing was to distribute them to the whole household. As the tree was lit up, twenty-five men walked through the drawing-room into the hall, and everybody seemed joyous and in high spirits, while on her table lay all Wagner's sketches for *The Twilight of the Gods*. This was the Master's sweet atonement for November 21. And her next entry is: " Yesterday evening I found Richard in tears. He had just sent Vreneli [1] the fifty gulden that he could no longer send to poor Tschudi, and he was thinking with great emotion about the time we had spent together at Triebschen and thanking me for having endured so much for his sake. . . .

" On the morning of the 25th were heard the strains of the *Idyll,* and after that the enchanting ' *Sagt mir, Kinder* (Tell me, children),' and Richard and I melted into tears. It was not till afterwards that I heard how this tribute which Richard had kept such a secret had been managed. He had engaged the orchestra from Hof and held the rehearsal yesterday at the Hotel Sonne; and he described how well the children had behaved at it, with no affectation, and yet modestly. Next, during breakfast, were heard melodies from *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, and *The Mastersingers*. Day of bliss! By this ocean of melody, as well as in words, Richard sweetly told me how blessed is my birthday, since he can celebrate it in such a way. How was it that such a crown has fallen to my lot? A lovely evening with the children, the whole thing beautiful and full of consecration." He greeted her with an Arabic proverb, and supplied the meaning of it in the words: " Thou art thou, thou art all things, by thee was everything inspired."

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[1] Vreneli was Wagner's housekeeper, at Triebschen and before; Tschudi the pastor who performed the marriage ceremony for him and Frau Cosima.—Tr.

Fresh from these impressions, she wrote the following beautiful words to her friend Mimi: " Thank you for your kind remembrances on my birthday. I have Wagner to thank for it that it was made dear and precious to me, and that, in spite of the rent which has been torn in the fabric of my life, I receive with touched delight all that love brings me — for instance, your dear wishes. There are so many who can send me no more now, and for this reason I dedicate my greeting to you and vow to you my unceasing and eternal remembrance. — When the *Idyll* rang out in the hall early yesterday morning, with '*Ewig bin ich, ewig war ich* (Ever live I, ever lived I),' my thoughts were with him who has passed into eternity, and yet here, wholly here with the Only one, who reconciled me to life and death. You know, do you not, that there is nobody upon earth of whom I think with such affection and whom I value so much as you? I am really touched as I think today of what you are to me — of what you are to us — and I rejoice that, in this world of anachronisms, I should have met with you. For upon the good that time has wrought here, you have set the seal of your deep, earnest mind and kind heart, and you have knit into a noble and indissoluble bond what might have ended in no more than a mere fleeting and unimportant meeting. My blessing upon you for this." She went on to speak in equally cordial terms of Marie Dönhoff, and especially of Lenbach, who had painted Frau von Schleinitz's portrait. " How I should like to see your portrait! Remember, now, that on our first visit to Berlin I told you that Lenbach was the only person who could paint you." And reverting to their conversations about passion and the passions, she uses the following beautiful words: "I have an unbounded respect for passion. When the prairie is on fire, the Indians hastily dig themselves a hole, throw themselves down in the damp earth, and allow the fire to burn away and rage itself out above them, without thinking of trying to check it. And that is what happens to me in connexion with passion." She then thanked her once more for the lottery, which had gone off so splendidly, making the donors of the pictures patrons of the Bayreuth scheme (*Patronatsherren*), an interchange of artistic achievement and mutual appreciation than which nothing more beautiful could be imagined.

But life at Bayreuth went quietly on its way. Both husband and wife were happy. When Frau Cosima told her husband that this had been her happiest birthday, he asked her why; and she replied: because *The Twilight of the Gods* was finished, and the real anxiety of their lives had thus been removed. And so the sound of the bells ringing in the New Year was full of promise. As they stepped out on the terrace at midnight, the Master again saluted her with the Indian greeting, "*Tat twam asi,*" and told her all that he had done: he had ordered the gardener to sweep away the snow from the stone covering the tomb and then to scatter food for the birds upon it. Their whole life was filled with the profoundest consciousness of their true companionship. With the clairvoyance of affection she divined all that he desired or thought. On the morning of New Year's Day, while he was looking for the theme of the scherzo for his symphony, Frau Cosima had already begun searching for the lost symphony in order to offer it him on his birthday. He now gave her the pearls which he had destined for her. For the rest, his time was occupied with reading Gfrörer's book, which had an extraordinary fascination for him. It was thanks to this book, in the first place, that he gradually got into the mood for *Parsifal,* which occupied his mind extraordinarily from this time onward till the moment arrived when he was able to set to work on the words and music.

Every day naturally brought its fresh stimulus, but also its fresh cares. On January 13 arrived Lenbach's portrait of Schopenhauer, of which she says: "Lenbach has absolutely worked a miracle here. He saw Schopenhauer once in Frankfurt, without knowing who he was. When the great man's photograph was shown him later, he recognized the face which had struck him, and lo! he is the only painter who has reproduced the man's very nature. I note the similarity with Richard Wagner: the chin, the proportion between the head and the face, one eye more open than the other, the piercing, melancholy glance, which is characteristic of genius. But what is more, one can see the whole of Schiller expressed in it too: energy, orderliness — in fact, the business-like orderliness of a merchant's son." But she was oppressed by Wagner's present, for she did not know how she was to requite it. She wrote a delightful letter about it to her friend Marie, who was now at the height of her activity in the cause of Bayreuth. In general, preparations were beginning for this year, which was actually to witness the first rehearsals. It is wonderful to notice how she succeeds in raising their everyday life above these daily recurring worries. But in this respect he was exactly like her, dealing with all practical business with decision and dispatch. Even crushing cares could not hold him long in bondage, and on returning from the difficult and nerve-racking negotiations which he had to conduct, he would say to her: " You have never betrayed me, and you are the only one." He felt, indeed, an infinite happiness in her company, and his gratitude overflowed in a gush of creation and song, as well as in words. Thus he said to her that, " now that he had found me, after his former shabby existence, he felt perfectly sure that he would live to an absurd age. We should both die gently, in a sort of euthanasia, on the sofa in his little room, which he has arranged for the purpose. ' Ah! ' he exclaimed one morning as I came to him in the hall, ' only to think that I have won you too! But you were the only woman who was suited to me. She had to be grand, yet childlike, as you are. But now I mean to live to an absurd age." And she adds humbly: " May Heaven bless him! He maintains that our happiness would never have existed and would never return. I believe it, to this extent at least, that it will never come back. In the evening he sang me ' *Sei mir gegrüsst* ' and declared it to be the finest of Schubert's songs in respect of feeling and artistic creation. It moved us to tears. How German it is — so pure and chaste and fervent! . . . Richard recalled how he had heard it sung for the first time by his sister Rosalie."

Schopenhauer's portrait was now hung up with due ceremony, and while they were doing this, the Master observed that his friend Hermann Franck, who was now dead, had once said to him: "Either something will come of Germany, or else it will not. If something does come of it, then Schopenhauer's philosophy will be taught at the universities." But it was only for a few days that he was left hanging side by side with the three great men. Wagner decided to move him, on the ground that he was not in the right place beside Goethe, Schiller, and Beethoven. "The philosopher must stand alone. All that others express by means of pathos he must translate into reflection." Richard was absolutely infuriated that Beethoven should be pushed into a corner. "Who can compare with him?" he exclaimed. "Is there anything like a melody, that gift straight from heaven?" And so quite a special place was assigned to him. And now arrived *The Bells of Strassburg* (*Die Glocken von Strassburg*), and she writes about this new composition of her father's: "A curious work; very effectively written, but so alien to us."

But it should not be forgotten how, amid all her tribulations, both material and moral, she went on with the education of her children, who owe their wide culture, based upon the broadest foundations, chiefly to this exceptional woman. She read the poets with them and in so doing entered into their works afresh, in quite a novel way. Thus on the very day when preparations had already to be made for their visit to Vienna, she wrote about *Nathan der Weise* (*Nathan the Wise*), which they had read together: "Once again I was greatly moved by many things in it, and was particularly touched by the way in which Assad's voice lingers in the soul of Saladin.[1] We lose all memory of the voices of those who are dead, but it can be awakened again. The words about 'paying out truth like a coin'[2] remind one of the mercenary view taken by the Jews of their relation to God."

Meanwhile discussions and preparations for the journey were

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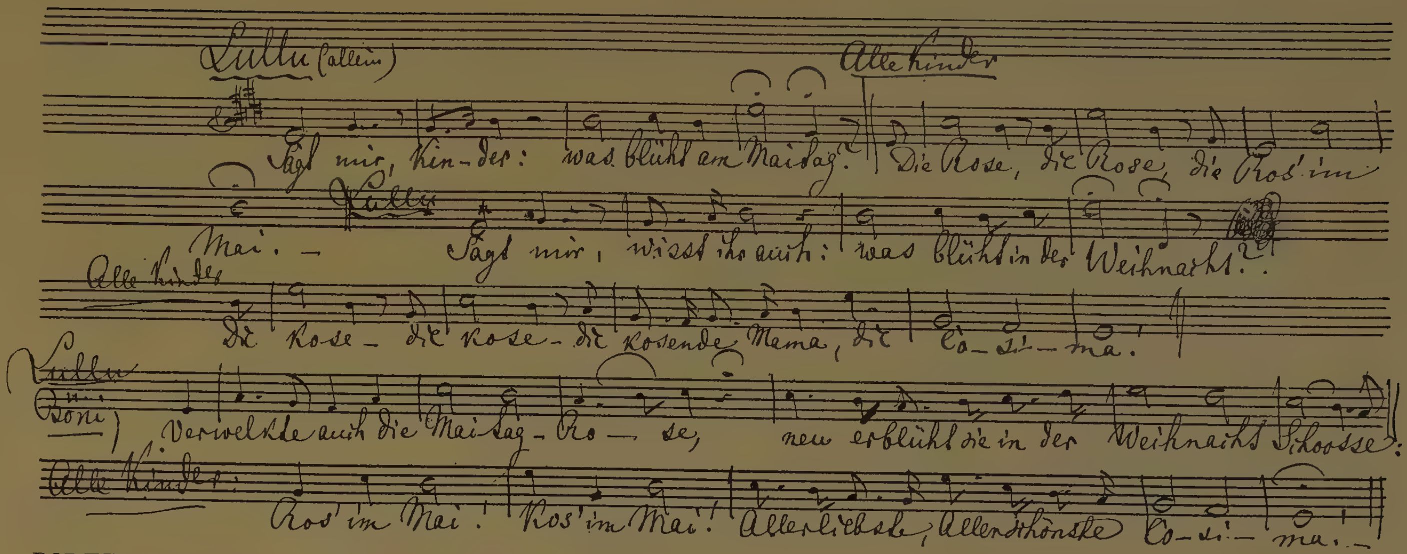
[1] Lessing, *Nathan der Weise*, IV, iii.—Tr.

[2] Ibid., III, vi.—Tr.


Lulu (allein)
Sagt mir, Kin-der: was blüht am Maitag?
Alle Kinder
Die Rose, die Rose, die Ros' im Mai. —
Lulu
Sagt mir, wisst ihr auch: was blüht in der Weihnacht?
Alle Kinder
Die Rose – die Rose – die kosende Mama, die Co-si-ma.
Lulu
Boni
Verwelkte auch die Maitag-Ro-se, neu erblüht sie in der Weihnachts Schoosse:
Alle Kinder:
Ros' im Mai! Ros' im Mai! Allerliebste, Allerschönste Co-si-ma.

BIRTHDAY SONG FOR COSIMA WAGNER BY RICHARD WAGNER
(*unpublished*)

proceeding, besides which the tests for the singers were in progress. In spite of all, she was really thoroughly delighted and satisfied with all she observed during these tests, for she observed the goodwill and the good spirit prevailing at them. On the other hand, this new concert tour was all the more painful to her, because Hans Richter had meanwhile appeared at Bayreuth with his young wife, who was also quite a well-known figure as a teacher of singing, and had undoubtedly done visible harm to Glatz, who had been proposed by Richter for the role of Siegfried. It was Frau Cosima who wrote to Marianne Brandt, who was afterwards closely connected with Bayreuth. In short, a great part of this business went through her hands, as well as the preparations for Vienna. These concerts were a heavy burden upon her mind, and she comments: " When I reflect that the concerts are in themselves such a depressing sign of the position of our affairs, it simply breaks my heart to see even these hedged about with difficulties. Add to this the spoiling of Siegfried's voice, and the way in which our worries keep on increasing, the nearer we seem to our goal, not to speak of Richard's age, and I can hardly master the burden that lies on my heart." But to the outer world she always showed herself serenely bright. Yet when the Richters left, she entered in her diary: " There is always a barrier between those who have no affinity for one another, however close they may have been drawn together. And so I had a decided impression that in future Richter would follow other paths." As a matter of fact, he had done nothing to lighten the cares which now weighed upon the Master with regard to Vienna. Not only had Glatz, the tenor, failed him, but he was even threatened with the loss of Materna. At heart Richter was no doubt sympathetic about all this, but he treated it lightly, with a sort of Viennese insouciance. How different were this noble pair when, during these very days of stress, they tried through the symphonies of Bruckner, who had been slighted by Herr Herbeck and others because he had been to Bayreuth to show the Master his symphonies and dedicate them to him. " How deplorable the condition of the musical world is! " she writes in her diary apropos of this. It was no wonder that Wagner grumbled: " I wish that all this nonsense was over, and that I could get to *Parsifal.*" "I cannot conceive," she remarks, "how he means to stand all these anxieties. Such a muddle in Vienna! Everything depended upon Richter's co-operation, and now he cannot get leave — and he knew this, too, when he applied for leave to get married. The only time when I am at peace is when I see him go to bed, and sleep rolls away from his existence the cares which are piled on him sky-high." And she writes later on: "Courage fails me to state the sum total of all the heavy cares that hang over our heads at present. I simply pass lightly over everything, try to calm him, and all I try to do is to make him forget. Let him but laugh heartily, and I feel as though I were victorious over life's tribulations." In spite of all, he was sensible of this wondrous influence: "When I went in to see Richard on the morning of our departure, he told me that the picture had comforted him. Rays of sunshine had fallen upon my portrait, and its glance fell upon him lit up with glory." On the night of the 21st–22nd they started for Vienna, where they were received in state by the good Standhartners and the Akademische Wagnerverein. Rehearsals began at once, and, since the Master never troubled himself about formalities or anything of that sort, she took all the steps which were absolutely necessary to the success of the concerts, especially in the Habsburg dominions. Apropos of this, Liszt writes, not without a note of blame for the Master: "Cosima exerts herself to the best of her ability to discharge the duties of courtesy on his behalf. She is at her post from early morning till late at night and does her duty brilliantly. On every side one hears words of praise and admiration for her." And the excellent Heckel was indeed right when, with special reference to this visit to Vienna, he characterized this noble woman's activity as follows: "None but the Master's most intimate friends knew how auspiciously this lady, distinguished as she is by the rarest qualities, co-operated in the carrying out of his projects, and especially in the preparations for the production of his stage festival dramas; how tirelessly she strove to spare him any avoidable agitation, how ready and able she was to undertake the settlement of unpleasant questions, for the consciousness that she was fulfilling a great and splendid duty caused her to make light of all misunderstandings. Her share in the ultimate success of the enterprise is inexpressibly great. The recollection of such self-sacrificing activity cannot but throw into relief such a rare example of the loftiest devotion to duty in our selfish age."

But this was not the only reason: a still greater one, perhaps, was the wondrous charm emanating from her, which, in Vienna of all places, was bound to produce an effect. It goes without saying that her friends, such as Marie Dönhoff, were drawn even closer to her; but before many days had gone by, she had made the conquest of all the aristocratic society of Vienna. Men and women alike were at her feet offering homage, while her fame reached even the Hofburg, together with accounts of the greatness and importance of the artist in whose cause she was straining every nerve and whose path she smoothed. So far as the great world was concerned, this was not difficult, and the Master, too, was thoroughly at home in it. Rarely has there been a more chivalrous and truly aristocratic — not to say princely — nature than that of the Master. When he went into society, he managed quite involuntarily and with no sort of effort to become its centre. And so the period of the three concerts in Vienna was of some importance in this connexion, too; for the Viennese attach greater weight and significance to outward appearances than is done anywhere else. Thus both Wagner and his wife produced a deep and lasting impression, against which criticism was of no avail. The critics might, indeed, attack the Master's works in writing, but they could not set limits to the effect produced by his personality, nor to the wondrous influence of this exceptional woman. She met a number of old acquaintances, such as the Princess Marie von Hohenlohe, whom she had not seen for the last fifteen years; but most of all she rejoiced to see her favourite, the Countess Marie Dönhoff, though she could never rid herself of anxiety on her behalf. As we have said, the whole of Vienna did homage to them, and from the palace of Prince Metternich, where Wagner revived his former acquaintanceship with the aged Princess, who overcame her hatred for all things German in order to befriend him, to the artist Makart, there was nobody who did not come into the closest touch with the visitors from Bayreuth. On entering Makart's studio Frau Cosima called it a "sublime lumber-room," but she felt at once that here was the right *milieu* in which to make a delicate and charming return for all the hospitality which they had accepted, and one which would succeed in bringing together the whole of Viennese society. With fine tact she naturally put the owner of the studio into the foreground as host, but for that very reason the party at Makart's was one of the most brilliant events of the Viennese season.

But all this formed a background for the concerts which the Master had undertaken for the sake of his beloved Bayreuth. It is true that Richter had made no preparations, and everything was lacking. But so soon as the rehearsals began and the Master's magnetic influence made itself felt, the feelings of the court orchestra, which had been on the verge of mutiny, were at once appeased. Frau Cosima at once entered into their feelings, and her influence over her husband enabled her to surmount all that was evil and ominous by virtue of her sympathetic heart. The entry in her diary on the 25th, the day of the second rehearsal, is as follows: "A spirit of mutiny among the orchestra. Discipline has absolutely vanished, owing to the fact that they have none but bad conductors, who succeed in maintaining their position simply by their weaknesses. Besides, they have so much to do — concerts, and the theatre every night before empty houses, in consequence of the general bankruptcy — that their irritability is excusable." But at the same time she was able to report that even at the first rehearsal the fragments from *The Twilight of the Gods* produced an unprecedented impression. "All that was previously known paled before it, its effect was like the mightiest forces of nature, and, transcending it all, what I heard passed before me and stamped itself upon my mind for ever." Naturally, this was not without effect upon those of the players who were really musicians. Thus she dominated the situation from every point of view. She was, of course, deeply moved when she visited their friend Lenbach after the first rehearsal and saw the portrait of Marie Mouchanoff in his studio: she was overpowered by the deepest emotion, and it must still be said even today that this portrait has expressed the character of that wonderful woman in all her grandeur, goodness, humanity, and beauty. But Frau Cosima's eye was upon everything. She arrived at a perfectly just estimate of the theatre, deploring the expensive mounting of the wretched ballet *Robert et Bertrand,* the costliness of which would have been worthy of a better cause; which prompted her to observe that, in spite of its aping of Paris, Vienna would never become a cosmopolitan city.

But even the rehearsals engaged the interest of the whole nobility. In Frau Cosima's box could be found the Countesses Andrássy, Dönhoff, Widenburg, and Cimadai; while at the general rehearsal it contained a perfect book of beauty illustrative of the Austro-Hungarian nobility. Then came the performance, about which Frau Cosima wrote to her friend in Berlin, whom she missed so badly: "I was very sad that you were not with us. *The Twilight of the Gods* surpasses the wildest dreams of the most convinced Wagnerians, and the audience was beyond belief. Perhaps you have seen in the papers the beautiful inscriptions on the laurel-wreaths which were showered on Richard in heaps. It seemed to me yesterday that it was the momentousness of the man himself that was being fêted here even more than his sublime art. Marie Dönhoff is lovely, gay, and charming, and her husband seconds her friendliness to us in the most delightful way; I have met some old acquaintances again — Marie Hohenlohe, whom I had not seen for fifteen years, Semper, whom I had not seen for eight — and formed new connexions, among whom the Countess Andrássy strikes me as the most interesting and agreeable. Frau von Meyendorff is here and was with me at the concert yesterday. On Saturday we leave for Pest, and on the 14th the concert here is to be repeated. Will you be able to come? Tomorrow we are giving a party in Makart and Lenbach's studio. My father is to conduct and play at the concert in Pest. Amid all this unrest there is one figure which hovers constantly before me, and I feel as though yesterday evening she whom I can never forget was at my side."

Thus did she enjoy and profit by Vienna. In the first place, she felt as if a sense of justice demanded that, if they could not revive their old relations with Semper, they should at least establish them on a good and honest footing, and she did so as early as the party in Makart's studio, in which everybody took part and everybody was well-disposed and in the best of moods. Nor is this to be wondered at; for never have the ladies of Vienna made such efforts to shine in dress as at the party in Makart's studio, which may be regarded as a climax in his life too. But Frau Cosima had a craving for art. Having visited Belvedere, Prince Eugene of Savoy's wonderful palace, she next went to see Semper. She talked over his plans with him thoroughly and in doing so realized the full tragedy of this artist's destiny, which might have been brought into such close and imperishable connexion with that of her husband. But this was not to be. When he showed her his new plans, she was struck by the fact that he had designed a building with four little cupolas, to which she gently took exception. He said this was a concession that he had made, and in saying this he spoke the word which separated him from Bayreuth; for it was the Master's boast, and his wife's too, that they never made any concession that might violate their artistic convictions. She accordingly writes: " A most melancholy impression. He remains poor, in spite of all the commissions granted him through imperial patronage — so poor that he does not venture to take a carriage. He looks so done for that I do not think he will live long; and then these colossal projects of his, in a State on the verge of collapse! The Hungarians and Germans form two parties at court, the former full of hatred for the German Empire, and Ultramontane in their sympathies; the latter in favour of an alliance with Germany and Liberal. A strange conflict, with the Emperor standing between them, a tragic, irresolute figure; and poor Semper, ignored by the whole of Germany, is building for this State, and perishing under his task." Affairs in Vienna could not have been represented in a truer or more tragic light. In politics, enthusiastic as she was for all that was vital and vivifying, when Frau Cosima saw ruin before her eyes she was a true Cassandra.

But she found her own pleasure in the society of Lenbach, Makart, and Marie Dönhoff. They were true artists, and a peculiar charm hovered about the little Italian Countess. Next they went on to Pest. In considering either political acts or concerts it is not the preparations beforehand upon which we should fix our attention, for these always bear the traces of haste and contain the possibility, not only of failure, but even of catastrophe. On March 6 they arrived in Pest. They were met at Neukirchen by her father who had been unable to dispense with the kind and excellent Baroness Meyendorff even at this meeting. His fate was ever thus, and Frau Cosima remarked: " My father is well and seemed decidedly cheerful in appearance." But even their intention to stay at the Hotel Hungaria was thwarted, and they had to reckon with the somewhat elaborate hospitality of Richter, who was able to entertain them because his mother-in-law was away travelling; but by this means the Master at least obtained quiet. Frau Cosima's first act was to visit her father on the next morning. She found him " strangely melancholy, and it was impossible to talk and spend the time with him as we had both expressed a wish to do beforehand in our letters "; for the Princess had her own diplomatic service, and though Frau von Meyendorff had soon returned her credentials, they still seemed to be in force on this occasion. They spent a melancholy evening at Richter's, where Liszt introduced the composition which he had dedicated to Marie Mouchanoff: *Schlummerlied am Grabe von Marie Mouchanoff*. He played it, and they were all overcome by the most heart-rending emotion as they recalled her who had been so dear to them. On the other hand, the general rehearsal was appalling, till Liszt sat down to the piano to play the Beethoven concerto. The premises were dreadful in every way, especially as regards acoustics; but as he played, everybody was affected, and his daughter writes: " Amazement! Unprecedented impression, incomparable magic! This is not mere piano-playing, but a creation in tones (*ein Ertönen*). Richard says that it makes all other playing seem dead." Between the general rehearsal and the concert Richter had crowded in a performance of *The Flying Dutchman*, at which Frau Cosima was justifiably indignant, saying in her diary: " *The Flying Dutchman* in the evening, conducted by Richter, sung in Hungarian and Italian, a great disappointment. Nowhere has the *Dutchman* been so much cut before. What is more, Richter has introduced clashing cymbals and so forth. I was amazed at him, a Wagnerian *par excellence*."

But Frau Cosima could not omit to look round the city itself, and her opinion of it, though severe — perhaps too severe — is none the less of great weight: "In the morning I went to the Museum. On the whole, my impression of Hungary is a most melancholy one. It seems to be on the road to utter dissolution. Thieving seems to be the order of the day in the administration, not to speak of megalomania — not a word of German may be spoken. Living is shockingly dear, and there is none but an effete, uncultivated nobility. Musical conditions are equally dismal. My father is cut off from everything, debarred from all activity, he is really utterly foreign here. Richter seems to feel at home!" This was of course drastic criticism and painted everything in exaggeratedly gloomy colours. But we should not forget that in the year '75 things were at a very low ebb in Hungary, and that Frau Cosima's acute penetration had to some extent hit upon the truth. However, the concert went off brilliantly, and, in spite of all their discussions and doubts, *The Bells of Strassburg* was also performed. The co-operation between Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner at this concert was an event of lasting importance; for the two of them belonged together both as men and as musicians in a way transcending all other ties.

Next they returned to Vienna for the second concert, which went off equally brilliantly and was quite dominated by the Master's strong personality. There can be absolutely no question that the effect which he now produced upon Vienna was decisive; for after a short time even that section of the management of the theatre which had previously had a grudge against him gave in so thoroughly as actually to adopt the Master's artistic views into the bargain in order to carry through the production of his works. But now it was time to bid farewell, and they hurried back to Bayreuth by way of Regensburg — that is, they had intended to hurry, but circumstances did not allow of this; and when they had to wait for five hours, not only at Regensburg, but also at Weiden, Frau Cosima sighed:

"Poor Bayreuth, sadly neglected, perhaps even persecuted." And how right she was! But they were received by the children with jubilation, and found them in the faithful charge of her with whom they had been left — that is, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, Nietzsche's amiable and clever sister, who had offered to take care of Wahnfried and the children during the parents' long absence. It was a real pleasure to this kind and appreciative woman, and she performed her functions in the most splendid way, thus winning a footing as one of the family at Wahnfried — a friendship which has continued up to the present day, in spite of all that has happened in the interval owing to her brother's tragic fate. She had, indeed, an original and exquisite nature, and while at that time she was still young, old age now lends her a most decided charm, so that she inspires the deepest sympathy in all those who have come in contact with her, and especially in those at Wahnfried. After spending a few delightful days with the returned travellers, she bade them an affectionate and cordial farewell, and Frau Cosima now put down with a severe hand the irregularities which her shrewd friend had discovered. She now felt for the first time that she was not the mistress of her servants, but, as so often happens to intellectual and high-spirited natures, their victim. A great court of inquiry was set up, and Frau Cosima went into the monstrous frauds that had been practised by unprincipled persons, and removed all the harmful elements.

But, in spite of all, they now felt to the full how peaceful their own home was. While she was dealing with business matters, he would often visit her in her own room, as though they were still newly married. He revealed to her all the creative ideas that were passing through his mind during these days when the conception of his *Parsifal* was developing, slight, as yet, as a spider's web, but gaining fresh strength every day. He talked to her of how impossible it was for him to treat a subject taken from the modern world since the Renaissance, except in the form of a comedy: in *The Mastersingers* alone had he found it possible. But when Nietzsche's friend Overbeck uttered a gentle warning against the Master's reading, which consisted chiefly of Gfrörer's work, and told Wagner that Gfrörer was a convert to Rome, the Master was at once able to destroy the force of this objection by saying that the cause of this was the appalling shallowness of the Protestant clergy, but at the same time, too, the terrible state of modern philosophy. Had Gfrörer known Schopenhauer, he said, such a conversion would have been impossible. The latter formed in general the basis for his further studies, which were transferred from Gfrörer to Görres, and he expressed the opinion that these books could be rightly grasped and appreciated only by a Schopenhauerian. Thus peaceful days reigned at Wahnfried, and released, as it were, from all impressions from without, they once more communed with each other in the greatness of the past — as, for instance, when Wagner said of the apparition of the Commander in *Don Giovanni:* " No romantic spirit in our day could be more romantic than certain features in this scene. God! what fellows they were, Mozart and Beethoven! Music must have absolutely raged within them like a fever." And in the quiet hours when they could lay aside the cares of the day, they found delight in the music of Beethoven. It is characteristic that now that he was once more setting to work at composing himself, the Master indulged in just such reflections as these more than at other times. For all that he now began to read, from Gfrörer and Guiot to Görres, was part of his preparation for his *Parsifal.*

But he had not yet reached this point. As early as April he had already spoken of his longing to embark upon a fresh work and mentioned *Parsifal.* He wanted to work at *The Victors* as well; at which she said with a sigh: " How I wish, too, that we were free of the whole muddle " — for nothing stood higher in her eyes than his creative work; yet they had so many anxieties. Their business relations with the King, and above all with his secretariate, had become one of the most painful features of their everyday life, thanks to Councillor Düfflipp's deliberation and pedantry, and necessitated constant interviews with the faithful Feustel and Gross. If only the Müncheners had been as magnanimous as the Bayreuthers — and, above all, Adolf von Gross, whose importance and influence became more and more evident, whether in spite of his father-in-law, or thanks to his favour — all these matters, which caused them so much anxiety, could have been settled with ease. But as it was, they took many months, and these months were times of suspense and apprehension, which in certain circumstances might have jeopardized the whole enterprise. There were hours which made the most humiliating demands on the Master's nerves and health, and also on those of his noble wife. And not only was Frau Cosima sensitive in this respect, but the whole thing was an appeal to her self-abnegation.

But it was only from time to time that the life at Wahnfried was influenced by this. The morning belonged to them both and to the creative power of the Master, at whose side she stood like a Valkyrie; and the evenings were given up to themselves, when the day came to a wondrous end. It was at such a time that he said his head was full of minuets. As a general rule those periods when he was not harnessed to a great work were always marked by an odd and almost humorous impulse to write symphonies, and he would at once jot down some theme or other, for his creative impulse never rested.

But Frau Cosima was further harassed by her duties as a mother. She had sent her two eldest daughters, Daniela and Blandine, to a boarding-school in Dresden, but had parted from them with a heavy heart; and the correspondence which she kept up with them might form in itself a chapter apart and has had to be regarded as lying outside the great life which she led with her husband. If Gottfried Keller has written the finest short story on education in his *Frau Amrain und ihr Jüngster*, the letters which Frau Cosima wrote with punctual alacrity to her two daughters at school form a treatise on pedagogy which might render many manuals on this singular science superfluous. We shall only be able to include a few excerpts from them in the following pages, but as a whole they enable us to realize that Frau Cosima's kind heart was capable of steeling itself to a certain severity when her daughters' future was in question. And the fact that they have become what they are in after life is, apart from their good disposition, most of all due to this wonderful and unique education. The Master, too, felt the greatest grief at the departure of the two stepdaughters who had become so dear to him; and in order to allay this feeling she wrote to him from Dresden telling him of her gratitude for the love and kindness which he had shown towards the children for the last six years. She rejoined her husband at Leipzig, when he revealed the fact that while she was away, he had fallen ill. They heard Schumann's *Genoveva* together, and in spite of the brilliant performance she was horrified at this work. It is indeed characteristic that her judgment of other works, too, was decidedly more severe than that of Wagner the musician, for she writes: " Utter horror at the vulgarity and coarseness of this work. The music full of Meyerbeerian tricks (*Meyerbeeriaden*), Marschner (in weak moments), and even Reissiger. The opening of the Overture prepossesses one favourably, but the *allegro* theme at once destroys this atmosphere. Appalling! And add to this that the public, which is attracted by nothing but vulgarity, was content to find such a thing in a classical work."

They continued their journey through Hanover and Brunswick to Berlin, where Frau von Schleinitz's house was again the centre of everything. Here they met the Helmholtz family, for the great physicist was also one of the warmest and most zealous adherents of the Master and his art. Frau Cosima went with Frau Marie to hear the new opera *Der Wehrwolf* (*The Werewolf*), by Count Hochberg, afterwards director of the Opera. Her opinion on this long-forgotten work is interesting: " It is no better and no worse than any other music you like." She was touched at finding in her friend's house the new portrait by Lenbach, which Frau Marie afterwards left to the house of Wahnfried, but which has never found its way there, owing to the outbreak of war. But she then wrote about the picture: " It is decidedly the finest portrait of Richard that has been painted. It causes one a feeling of sadness not to possess it, though one quite unmingled with envy." Without for a moment losing sight of her husband's interests, his health, and his art, she went her own way, seeing and hearing everything. One evening she went with Professor Döpler, who designed some of the costumes for Bayreuth, to hear the Meiningen company in *Die Hermannschlacht*, which interested her intensely: " In spite of much that was odd, it was very arresting, and the presentment very curious, the poem not drawn from the period at all, but modern in feeling, and Thusnelda was rather like the silly German women who were happy to fraternize with the French. The historical realism of the costumes was not in keeping with this, but it was all interesting to watch, and much of it is even affecting — for instance, the scene of Marbod with the children, and the night scene." And she adds: "While we were listening to the Meiningen company, fashionable Berlin was acclaiming Anton Rubinstein's *Makkabäer* (*Maccabees*)." Even her friend could not resist this piece, and we can discern a touch of pain in Frau Cosima's words. But this was due rather to her general state of mind, for she writes one morning: "It is all very tiring. At times I feel as though I could no longer bear the day." But now practical matters came to the fore. On Monday the 19th she accompanied the Master to the rehearsal, where open rebellion reigned, with less manners than on the previous occasion in Vienna. "The gentlemen sat at their desks with their hats on their heads and cigars in their mouths, refusing to rehearse on the ground that it was a day of humiliation; the horn-players were unable to play, and it was really a question whether the concert could take place." But Wagner's influence over musicians was always such that all obstruction was silenced on the spot, and the musicians acquiesced in the arrangement of the orchestra, which the Master now held absolutely in the hollow of his hand, with a thoroughgoing musical absolutism with which these gentlemen were naturally not familiar in their Berlin conductors. And so everything went on well till the performance. In the interval Frau Cosima met Lothar Bucher, and they spoke of the wretched state of Germany: "Fraud and bad work on every side; people send for their furniture from Paris; our friend [by which she means Lothar Bucher] who used to attach so little importance to such things, makes the journey to London in order to get his clothes there. With regard to Bismarck [who was then in the middle of the *Kulturkampf*] Bucher said that he had meant to carry out all his attacks on the Catholic clergy simultaneously; but he had had such trouble with the powers that he had to cut off the dog's tail bit by bit; upon which Richard remarked: 'Four years ago he was recommending the Jesuits; now he is recommending the Jews. They are devouring us.' Upon which Bucher, too, said that even the minister (Friedland!) is a Jew." But Wagner's views tended in another direction than those of Bucher; for while they were taking a walk in the Tiergarten, he said, as they stood before that singular artistic production the Siegessäule (column of Victory), that the best thing Germany had produced in their day was the Prussian army organization; but that he had little sympathy with what it was then defending.

Meanwhile, in spite of the day of humiliation and the English intervention in Berlin, the rehearsals had resumed their progress. But the general rehearsal was an event in itself. Frau Wesendonck was present with a number of friends, who all said how deeply affected they were, especially Helmholtz, " who wept all the time he was listening to these divine things. I was unutterably agitated. The whole close of it [*The Twilight of the Gods*]is really a paraphrase of the words 'Not goods, nor gold, nor glory of gods . . . Blessing in weal and woe, Love alone can bring.' The whole world of the gods, the powers of nature, all serve, as it were, to shed glory upon the most glorious of women! . . . At the close of the rehearsal Richard said to me: 'The Awakener comes (*Der Wecker naht*),[1] and then I always have to think of you. You have awakened all things in me to fresh life — love, creative work, everything.' " Next came the concert, at which Frau Cosima was present in Frau Marie's box, amid a really brilliant company — the Baroness Loën, Frau von Bülow, and Prince Liechtenstein. Frau Wesendonck remarked that the Master wore an expression " of great comfort," which he had never had before. Even Bucher was affected by the music, for the first time in his life. The second concert, on the following afternoon, went off brilliantly too, and their stay in Berlin came to a splendid close. They made the acquaintance of Mommsen at the house of Helmholtz, where in company with Herr von Radowitz they laid down the lines of a plan for bringing pressure to bear on the State to intervene on behalf of Bayreuth. But the Radowitzes were of course fatal to any bold enterprise, and so nothing came of the plan. Menzel's evening party was far finer, when his son-in-law greeted the Wagners with extracts from *The Twilight of the Gods*. It was a beautiful thing to witness: such strains as these in the studio of Menzel, that most modern of artists, who had sought inspiration more than any other in the old Prussian character! It was a great delight to the little man to show all his treasures to a woman with such a feeling for art — even those which were still hidden in his portfolios. Next came yet another dinner at the hotel, at which Bucher too was present and offered a fine illustration of diplomatic ways by adorning his conversation with a flood of details, either true or untrue, and malicious remarks about everybody of note, from Mommsen to the Empress. Yet what he said about Bismarck, whose policy he alleged to be absolutely paralysed by that of the Empress, was weighty. " While the Army was before Paris," he said, for example, " it was impossible to attack, because the shells did not arrive. At the end things reached such a pass that the railways were blocked with provisions for the Parisians, sent by the Empress and the Princess Victoria. Important business had to be set aside because she tormented the Emperor so much that the doctors were afraid of a stroke. Bismarck was absolutely worn out and ill. And there was another thing. Bismarck was constantly receiving threats and warnings. Among other things, Bucher quoted a letter which was really absolutely mad and calculated to drive anybody else mad too. Bismarck had said recently that he was glad of the street-boys who always followed him about, for then he was sure that no attack would be made on him from behind; as for what was in front of him, he was quite ready to protect himself." These remarks throw a glaring light on Berlin in the Bismarckian period, and not a very beautiful one, and we can see that Bismarck suffered as much from the tendencies against which he had to fight there as Richard Wagner did in Bayreuth. It was only by their personal qualities, their power of action, and their determination that they succeeded in surmounting the opposition with which they were faced. Indeed, when we consider them both, we should not emphasize the disagreements between them, but, like the Master and his wife, regard them solely from the point of view that each had his task, and each had to go his own way.

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[1] *Twilight of the Gods*, III, ii, Siegfried's death-song. — Tr.

And it must be added that they went their way in spite of everything.

On returning to Bayreuth they met with a loss which caused unspeakable grief at Wahnfried — that of their faithful companion Russ, about which Frau Cosima wrote the following touching letter to the children at school: "Loldi and Eva have written to tell you what a loss we have suffered. Yesterday Rausch found Russ lying dead on the straw covering one of the beds in the kitchen garden; only yesterday he was running after our carriage on the way to the theatre, jumping and barking gaily. I noticed with what passionate attachment he followed Father Richard's every movement; on his return home he ate his food and barked as usual, today he is gone and in him we have lost a good spirit of our house. Today is the first real spring day, very mild, but overcast and rainy; they say that at this time of year those who have not much strength easily pass away, and our Russ was no longer young. He was the same age as Loldi and came to the house at Triebschen a year before Eva was born; he watched faithfully over Fidi when he came into the world; he kept constant guard over our hearth and showed nothing but goodness and friendliness to us all. One must have learnt from one's experience of life what a rare thing absolute devotion and attachment are on the part of men, to appreciate the friendly wagging of a dog's tail, its faithful eyes and absolute attachment. Our old friend is to be buried in the morning at the foot of our grave. I have impressed upon the little ones never to forget him; that is how they can requite his faithfulness and goodness!"

This was the last thing they did before leaving for Vienna for the third and last concert, which the Master had had to make up his mind to give. It was not a particularly pleasant journey, and it cannot be said that Frau Cosima consented to it with inward rejoicing; nor was the financial success as considerable as they had expected. But the impression created by it, and above all by Hagen's vigil,[1] was prodigious. For Frau Cosima the meeting with old Semper was a matter of importance, and she said that he quite came to life again in the Master's company. This time he talked of what a fraud polychromy was, and of his desire to leave Vienna, and said: " What does it matter to me whether the Emperor is building a castle? The Germans are homeless, genius has no abiding-place in Germany." Indeed, Semper's fate was always noteworthy because of the vast contrast between him and Wagner, with whom he had been associated for so many years; for the full significance of the Master of Bayreuth now revealed itself in the fact that he remained absolutely true to himself. He did not enter the service of any prince, and at the time when he was forced to become dependent upon the King of Bavaria, he retained his full sense of the freedom due to a genius. In this lies the great distinction between them. He was helped, it is true, by one thing: by the fact that he, the genius, had a tutelary genius at his side in the shape of his wife, who supported him wondrously at every moment. Though her moral resistance was often simply crushed by it, she shouldered the task and was never turned from her path by the struggles which her beloved husband had to wage. But she had to lead two lives, in a way of which none but a quite exceptional and unprecedentedly grand nature would have been capable, during these hard days — especially hard for her, because she was also thinking with supreme pity of the man whom she had been forced to abandon. Shortly before their departure for Vienna, news had reached her of the serious financial losses which Bülow had suffered on his London concert tour, as the result of fraud and breach of faith. This had naturally reacted gravely upon his health, but also upon her daughters' fortune; though it was not the loss of her children's money that concerned her, but the deep sympathy which she felt for this great-hearted man in the loss of all his profits after so many years' work; and she writes in her diary: " This news plunges me into such a melancholy frame of mind as almost to destroy my balance. If once one loses the feeling of absolute submission in all things, if only for a moment, then such a blow as this comes upon one and reduces one to a sorrowful calm once more! How hard it is, how crushing! " She found her only consolation in the fact that *The Twilight of the Gods* was completed, and, above all, in the Master himself, who said to her: " It must be a joy to you, after all, that I should have created such a thing under your ægis. No, I should never have written it otherwise. It is you who charmed these strains out of me." And she adds: "He is thinking a great deal about his *Parsifal*, and means to arrange his reading with a view to it. May God's blessing be upon him!" She shared all his cares — indeed, it was she who had to bear the greater part of them; for all news was brought in the first place to her, and it was her task to communicate it to the Master, in addition to her other and more important duty of protecting him against these impressions, for, though still engaged in creative work, he was growing old. This was a function and a mission that she was never allowed to forget; while, for his part, he was conscious of her presence and control as of a waft of poetry, and she herself records how he said that she was "like the gazelle which led the Indian hermit back to life again; but for which he would have been absolutely done for." Next came his birthday, on which the children contributed the principal part of the entertainment. She had coached "the three little ones" in a way which drew tears of emotion from the Master, and she sends the following description to the two daughters in Dresden: "The hall [at Wahnfried], May 22, 1875. In the middle was the bust of Father Richard, surrounded by all the plants from the greenhouse, in front of the bust Fidi, as Faith, in a blue mantle with sword and palm, on the right-hand side Loldi, as Love, in a red robe, with roses in her hair, holding out her hand in blessing over the bust, and on the left Eva, as Hope, in green and white, with her head leaning against the bust, and an anchor at her side. And they spoke the following verses:

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[1] *Twilight of the Gods*, II, i. — Tr.

LOVE

As none other hast thou known me,
As none other hast thou sung me,
From the Fays to the Nibelungen
Faithful service hast thou shown me,
So my blessing shall not fail,
And 'tis Love that bids thee: Hail!

FAITH

Thou hast me
And hast preserved me,
Hail to thee!

HOPE

I am with thee alway
And will never leave thee,
Though I seem to deceive thee,
Though unseen, here I stay,
This day is mine,
And I am thine.
Hail to thee!

ALL

Hail to thee!

After this came the *Huldigungsmarsch*, played by the military band, which had been disposed ready in the garden. Eva (that is, Hope) wept with emotion, and so did Loldi (Love) after her, but Siegfried remained imperturbable."

Thus she enabled even the children who were away to take part in the festivity. Indeed, the way in which at this critical age Frau Cosima surrounded her daughters with her infinite solicitude from a distance forms a chapter apart in her life. Every one of the many letters which she wrote to them contains a wealth of good counsels, not only of a personal nature, but such as might well be taken thoroughly to heart by everyone in charge of children. I need only cite the words that she wrote to Daniela on the day after the Master's birthday: "I am very glad that you have two friends; cultivate this friendship well. Be helpful to your friends whenever you can, and give way to them; if anything good comes your way, share it with them. Let yourselves be punished in their stead; in short, practise and cherish love." Such were the grand lines on which this education was planned, and it never flagged for a moment, though every day brought her fresh tasks; for she had to be consulted about everything, and her advice was always required, not only in the construction of the theatre, but in the raising of funds and, not least, in the Master's plans, which, amid the prodigious tasks involved in the festival performances, were already centring on his *Parsifal*.

Next she was summoned to Weimar, where the anniversary of Marie Mouchanoff's death was being solemnized by a memorial celebration. It was a moving — indeed, a heart-rending — occasion, and she writes to Daniela: " I am writing to you both from Weimar, where I arrived yesterday, and, God be thanked, found your grandpapa very well. I am staying here at the Erbprinz, in the room where you slept with me; Frau von Schleinitz has the little *salon* with the bedroom adjoining it, and Frau von Dewitz the last room, as they had two years ago. The only one missing is the loveliest and most gifted of us all, whom we have now met together to commemorate. This induces a grave and profound state of mind, inspires one with devotional sentiments, and summons one to lay aside all distractions and rid oneself of all that is merely external." And after the service she continues: " The memorial celebration for our friend is just over. It was very moving. First a requiem, or hymn for the dead, then a *Legend of St. Cecilia*, the patron saint of music, then an elegy, or lament, then a *Child's Prayer on Awakening*, which Grandpapa wrote for us three (two of us have already passed away!). Everything was by Grandpapa." The performance of *Tristan* was of considerable importance to her, if only for the reason that she now heard Herr and Frau Vogl for the first time and was so impressed by their singing that she invited them both to Bayreuth. But apart from this she was filled with the deepest anxiety about her father and, on leaving him with a heavy heart, could find no peace till she had questioned her friend,[1] too, about her father's condition: " If you want to do me a kindness, dearest, do tell me how you left my father. I arrived with a bleeding heart and found a very anxious state of affairs there!

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[1] Frau von Schleinitz. — TR.

How did you find him at the end? Wagner is well, God be thanked. He says that when I am away, he simply does not exist, but, allowing for this, he was not in a bad condition. The grace and might of his great vocation rest upon him. I had five hours to wait at Eisenach, but my sacrifice was entirely useless; I have experienced so many of these works of supererogation. I was rewarded by Wagner's thanks." The allusion is no doubt to her two hours' interview with the Grand Duke, which was certainly interesting to him, but led to no particular result; for the parting of the ways between the Grand Duke of Weimar and the father of this great daughter had already begun. It is interesting that the Countess Tolstoy was present at this performance of *Tristan* in Weimar, and Frau Cosima writes with regard to her: "Should the Countess Tolstoy happen to be with you still, do give her my greetings. Wagner was very cross because I only spoke of his acquaintanceship with the Count; in connexion with her he even recalled certain details — for instance, the fact that when he met this inspiring lady, they tried experiments in magnetism. Ah, if only I were not in such anxiety! It weighs upon my heart, and I simply give way to it, for fear of a surprise such as we had last year. At times I contemplate forcibly transplanting him [Liszt] here, but then my courage fails me."

But she had no time to dwell upon these anxieties, which were soon allayed by a telegraphic message saying that Liszt was better. And now rehearsals and business crowded upon her more and more. The Master said that his enterprise seemed to him like a will-o'-the-wisp dancing over a marsh; but it was only too real and weighed upon Wahnfried to such an extent that Frau Cosima had to put forth all her powers to support this burden. This was all the more difficult for her because at the same time she was full of anxiety about Hans von Bülow. On June 30 she received a letter in which he informed her of his great — indeed, crushing — losses and, as though that were not enough, told her of a slight stroke, the consequences of which were incalculable; upon which her comment is: "Once more the sword is turned in my heart, and all my wounds are torn open again. How often is this to be repeated? I at once replied with a statement of the property which I shall be able to leave the children and at the same time implored him to give up his plan of a visit to America, to which he still clings, with the idea of beating up (*erjagen*) a certain amount for the children. . . . With such grief as this at my heart I have to receive our first singers." It is no wonder that this fateful month of July, which was set apart for the rehearsals, opens in her diary with the words: "Heaven help me to bear my heavy heart! At the first note of music my heart is ready to break." But she was at her post during all the rehearsals, and everybody admired her bearing and the way in which she succeeded in guiding and directing all things, both at the theatre and, above all, at Wahnfried. Not only the singers, but guests, too, arrived in shoals, besides Marie von Schleinitz, of course, for whom she had succeeded in securing a lodging in the royal palace by applying direct to the King. And so the rehearsals ran their brilliant course, "strangely uplifting, but exhausting." She possessed the art of hovering like a good spirit over the whole of these great proceedings and of acting as mediator from day to day; and though the singers were so touchy that every morning the Master had to inquire: "Has everybody gone?" she always succeeded in effecting a reconciliation, in order to avert a worse catastrophe. Her father arrived, too, and was in the highest degree affected by the work. It is significant that he should have written to the Princess while still under its influence, insisting upon its full importance. Seldom had he written with such vigour to that energetic and vehement woman.

But there were certain excitements and obstacles for which even Frau Cosima failed to find a remedy; for, in accordance with the character of that generation, neither Niemann nor Richter failed to resort to certain tiresome tricks common among artists. When Niemann returned the part of Siegmund, after behaving in a perfectly foolish way, this was only one of the many everyday incidents that no director and nobody familiar with theatrical affairs would take seriously, nor did they do so at Bayreuth. They merely recalled how scandalously he had behaved at Paris at the time of the performances of *Tannhäuser*. But it was a different matter with Richter, who was the cause of an exhaustive correspondence, in which Frau Cosima, too, felt bound to intervene. Unfortunately the last great evening, the wonderful garden fête given to the artists at Wahnfried, suffered a little in consequence; but after the artists had gone, the papers began to talk about great dissensions, directing their attacks chiefly against Frau Cosima, and it was found that Hans Richter had unintentionally been the cause of this. She therefore wrote to him on August 25, representing to him in downright language that his feelings of hostility for her left her quite unmoved, but that if he did not express his heart-felt regret to Richard for having allowed himself to be led astray by gossip, he should never have anything to do with Richard again. The Master saw this letter, which she wrote in the middle of the night, and now took vigorous steps himself; and, whatever other accounts of the matter may say, the telegram in which Richter replied clears the whole question up: " Most honoured Master, pray write me all that you wished to say, that I may see where I was wrong and express my regret. Repenting of my absence, I assure you that my fidelity has never wavered. With lifelong devotion, Hans Richter." Thus this interlude was also smoothed over. The reports in the papers, which had been aimed at Frau Cosima in particular, were silenced by a vigorous statement by the Master. They had indeed reason to be content with the rehearsals. It was significant, at any rate, that von Hülsen, the Intendant of the Berlin Opera, had been present, with reference to which Frau Cosima writes somewhat ironically to her friend Mimi: " What do you say to our having had a visit from Herr von Hülsen, who attended the first rehearsal in the theatre with scenery (it was magnificent) and spent the evening with us? Early this morning he sent me his thanks for the reception I had given him, and assured me that he would do what he could for the enterprise."

Then peace once more descended upon Wahnfried, and Frau Cosima gives a description of these days in a letter to her friend: " How happy I am, beloved friend, that your stay in Gräfenberg is still favoured with this lovely autumn weather! I had been longing so much for a few lines from you that I thought a considerable time must already have elapsed, and was beginning to be anxious, when your dear letter arrived. If you thank us, what ought not we to do to you? Your very appearance is a refreshment, and, as I lately wrote to a friend, intercourse with you is beautiful both at the moment and in the long run too, for you are both amiable and true, both charming and profound." And she goes on to give a picture of her relations with the Master: "During part of our conversation I introduced the subject of the Americans, in the connexion with which you are acquainted. But yesterday I was summoned and had a letter read to me. I interrupted him at the passage about princes, and the letter was torn up, not at all good-humouredly. I had a depressing afternoon, and I really ask myself whether success is worth such depression. But one thing I believe: that I have prevented him from making certain communications to them. We are now deeply absorbed in *Parsifal.* There are not many discoveries to be made, and here, as ever, Wagner will be quite a creator. One conclusion is fairly well established: that the Grail and its legend express the longing of the Christian soul to commune with the Redeemer apart from the Church and without any hierarchy — not a protest, but the creation of a contrasting ideal (*Gegenschöpfung*). Thus we have also read Guiot of Provins (author of a lost work on Parzival), and Wagner has adopted as his motto the first verse, '*en ce siècle puant et horrible* (in this foul and horrible age).' It was a pleasure to me to see the Flavignys, my mother's forbears, mentioned among the eminent persons whom he enumerates, just as Homer does the Greek ships; for the rest the poet's lament is couched in very much the same terms as we might use."

They next started out on a visit to Bohemia, of which she also gives her friend a detailed account: "Beloved Mimi (I used to call my sister, of whom you so often remind me, 'Mionny'), we have been home for two days after making a little expedition, which was not in the least a sensible thing to do, and which I had opposed in principle, but in the end, as usual, I accepted it cheerfully, and it really turned out most auspiciously." And she describes their progress through the Bohemian watering-places, Teplitz and Prague. "We returned home by way of Eger, and I admit that, thoroughly lacking in historic sense as I am, I thought more about you than about Wallenstein; that is, I thought only of you, and not of him at all. Is it some considerable time since you were in Prague? In my opinion it is the only city in Germany which has changed for the better. Whether this change is a good thing politically I am unable to estimate. But this much is certain, that there are signs of real life here, that Jewry is very little in evidence — the Cardinal Prince opposed the concession of the theatre to a Jew — and that the Slav character finds charming expression. There is a firm alliance between clergy, nobility, and Czechs; this is probably a bad thing, but it turns out to the advantage of tourists. The unhappy German element is adulterated with Jewry, the leaders of the German party are three Jews! ‘ Lucky Austria ’ has inherited another thirty-five millions in the person of its Emperor, whereas it is always treated like a step-mother by Mars and is faced with the most unprofitable war, so that one might almost suppose that, in the lives of nations, as of individuals, the same phenomena, on the whole, recur so long as these exist. In the picture-gallery I found a very fine Mabuse, a St. Luke drawing a picture of the Blessed Virgin, a very early friend with which my mind has many associations. The rapture and abstraction of a saint and the meditative objectivity of genius are expressed in the striking face, and to this is added the most glorious setting. I even made a friend on this journey. On the way from Teplitz I spent some time in the waiting-room at Aussig; here I noticed a lady who, leaving her elderly attendant, rose in some haste, took a few steps forward, and then sat down again. At last she addressed me, saying: ‘ You are Frau Cosima, are you not? ’ In my astonishment I stammered: ‘ Yes,’ whereupon she added: ‘ You do not know me, but that is little to the point. It was I who closed Marie Mouchanoff’s eyes, I know how dearly she loved you.’ She said this in a quivering voice, with trembling hands and eyes full of tears. Since she was on her way to Prague, where I was to arrive that afternoon, I arranged to meet her there, and we spent an evening together, lost in memories. It did me good to hear about Marie’s dying days at last in this way, and it did her good too, for she said it was the first time she had said all she had to say about it, adding: ‘ Those who have not seen that woman die have never beheld real grandeur.’ She knew all about everything, and she spoke well of

Mouchanoff. . . . Her name is Emilie Sciersputowski. She is travelling with her mother and made a great impression upon me, not only by what she told me, but also by her character. Marie used to say: 'I love Emilie because she is so vehement,' and the vehemence of her feelings could be read in her eyes and in the ineffable grief, whose manifestations she was unable to control. She is very devout and made a pilgrimage to beg Marie's life of the Virgin — ah, how well I understand this! I have more faith in miracles than in doctors! She gave me a little medal with the necklace, just as Marie had worn it, an '*immaculata*' such as I used to venerate and wear in my childhood; I have it round my neck now, and once more wear this symbol with feelings of piety and love, though of course in a different spirit. And so I revelled in grief, as my heart so often feels the need to do, though I do not venture to gratify it."

This is a piece of Frau Cosima's emotional life which permits us to know her absolutely as she is, with that positively mystical blend of emotions, which has certain resemblances with her father's religiosity, but, on the other hand, is permeated with the consciousness of her husband's greatness and by her own conception of the world here and beyond. For her eyes also turned towards the former: towards Lenbach and her approaching visit to Cairo, and towards the little Countess Marie Dönhoff, whose destiny she had so much at heart, and whom she always watched over and loved in her characteristic way.

The old life went on at Wahnfried. But the idea of *Parsifal* hovered between her and her husband like an unspoken secret, and this period of creation brought Frau Cosima, as it were, a new springtide of love, though of a love thoroughly permeated with spirituality. Thus on October 10 she wrote to her friend: "Twenty-two years ago today Wagner and I saw each other for the first time. It was the very day on which I saw my father again after eight years — there suddenly appeared in our quiet abode my father, the Princess Carolyne, her daughter Marie, Berlioz, and Wagner, who read us *The Death of Siegfried*. This was a great deal to happen all at once to three children who thought themselves cut off, not only from the world, but also from family life. That day has remained deeply imprinted upon my memory.

I know nobody with whom I can talk of it now, most dearly beloved friend, except you, to whose lovable and loving nature my heart opens itself without restraint. It seems to me as though Wagner had not changed in the least in these twenty-two years, but had only developed, both in expression and in character; on that occasion I did nothing but look at the floor, my weak eyes and shy disposition made me unable to do anything but snatch at everything by stealth, as it were, though I knew that, strictly speaking, it did not exist for me. Great blessedness has descended upon me now. I recall it today and number among my blessings the acquisition of your friendship, which, I am bold enough to believe, will never be torn from me." It is clear from the following letter how much she was living in the idea of *Parsifal* at that time: "Have I told you before that Wagner originally thought of introducing the wandering Parzival by Tristan's sick-bed in the third act? It is certainly better that he gave up the idea; yet the image of it has remained in my mind, and my imagination has often been busy with the thought of what Tristan, suffering from the grievous pains of love, would have had to say to him who was filled with pity and longing. How did you come across Tristan again? I take care not to meet him, for when I do, I fall under a spell." She next goes on to speak of Goethe and Berlioz. "The last few evenings we have spent over the annals of Goethe and his fine speech on Wieland. Little of Wieland himself will survive, but the image which he left in the transfiguring mirror of the greater genius will remain for ever. As regards music, we have been occupied with Berlioz; Rubinstein had to play us the *Fantastique*, which was the cause of more labour than enjoyment. There is a great wealth of ideas and melody in it, but they are like the good seed cast upon stony ground: the plant which springs up from it is withered; it is as though two factors were always necessary in order to produce fruit, and one-sided talent causes one an astonished malaise, yet one should not neglect to study him, I think one might sooner omit Schumann from one's studies."

And, almost shyly, she invited her friend to the performances in Vienna, which the Master was forced to visit for material, financial reasons, in order to conduct the rehearsals of

Tannhäuser and *Lohengrin.* A short stay in Munich awakened in her sad memories of the past, and most of all of Hans von Bülow, whom she pitied so deeply. "A week ago we arrived in Munich," she wrote from Vienna. "I saw Lenbach at the station, and again on the following day in his studio, where he had a heavenly picture of the little one [the Countess Dönhoff]. He had also painted another portrait of my father, in a very pompous style (I can find no other expression). It was difficult to imagine his state of mind. He spoke of his journey to Cairo, and is coming to Vienna in a fortnight's time to fetch Makart, who does not, however, quite believe in the idea. Schack, whom we also went to see, asked after you — so it was not a case of 'Out of sight, out of mind.' Here I met Emilie S., who was expecting me and with whom I spent a large part of the next two days. Next I went to see Ellen Heldburg,[1] whom I had not seen for fourteen years. She would have it that I had not changed, and fell quite into the old tone. I found her more confident, but sought in vain for the originality which used to fascinate me in her; but I bless this *rapprochement,* you know why. Yesterday I wanted to return the call, but in the mean time she had had to undergo an operation and was lying ill in bed. I was received by the Duke, who did not seem quite satisfied with the success of his troupe. We heard Verdi's *Requiem* and Bizet's *Carmen* here, besides the ballet *Brahma.* I do not think you will be spared *Carmen.* The observation forced itself upon me that the French are now the only nation which possesses talent. Talent is apparent even in this repellent work — the *Requiem* belongs to the category to which Spontini relegated all his fellow-countrymen.[2] The rehearsals for *Tannhäuser* have begun and with them troubles of every sort. We were afraid that the first scene would kill all the rest, for we have no men capable of keeping up the sense of the drama throughout the fantastic scenes in it. This is a deficiency which is all the more painful because the director is kinder, more obliging, and more enthusiastic than ever."

Indeed, the period of the rehearsals was full of torment and anxiety, but at home the Master found his wife and the children, whom she had brought with her on this long visit; and here again Frau Cosima had occasion to play the *grande dame*. She took advantage of her free hours to visit the museums and to meet artists, whose numbers were swelled by Makart and Lenbach, besides Semper, who, though he produced an impression of great weariness and age upon her, became " gloriously alive " when the conversation turned upon Michelangelo, who, he said, had " called up forms of Nirvana, created a new world out of dissected corpses, figures full of life, yet which did not belong to life. He was far greater than Phidias." Thus the last days of this remarkable and unhappy man shed yet another gleam of light upon the soul of this noble woman.

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[1] Morganatic wife of the Duke of Meiningen. — Tr.

[2] Wagner in his reminiscences of Spontini (*Gesammelte Schriften*, V, 128) quotes a saying of his that, in music, the Italians were "simply *cochons.*" — Tr.

Side by side with this all sorts of odd things were taking place. Shortly before the first performance of *Tannhäuser* the Master learnt that the Princess Marie Hohenlohe had asked in the theatre whether the costume of Venus would not be *à la* Offenbach. The Master asked his wife to write to her on the subject, which she did, receiving a reply which succeeded in reassuring her entirely. But from these dealings and from her subsequent intercourse with the Princess she obtained a clear impression that Carolyne von Wittgenstein's daughter, too, was essentially lacking in sincerity, and in later days, as the " Lady of Bayreuth," she gave expression to this feeling of mistrust in terms which, though polite, were drastic and uncompromising.

It was, indeed, no easy task for the Master to coach the performers in the operas, yet once again he proved his greatness both as conductor and as stage manager. But the days which both he and his wife spent here were a time of tribulation, as is shown by a letter to Marie von Schleinitz, which has, at the same time, a psychological importance: " First of all, the expression of my devotion (*Meine Ergebenheit zuvor*), as Albrecht Dürer writes; I send you my love, devotion, and fidelity, only to proceed to what is horrid and ugly — that is, an account of my life. You knew, did you not, beloved friend, that if I neither telegraphed nor wrote immediately after the first performance, this must have had something to do with the general horror (*dem Unding an sich*)? And, as a matter of fact, seldom has such melancholy descended upon me after a so-called success — the various orchestral rehearsals had already upset me greatly. One scarcely sees anything definite on these occasions — nay, if I may be so bold as to say so, one scarcely hears anything. The inward eye, like the inward ear, grasps something, which does not reveal itself again at the performances. I really did not know whether the performers were doing their work well, I only knew that Wolfram, Elisabeth, and Tannhäuser were once again speaking to me. But the defects appeared at the performance. To this was added the uproar of a somewhat Semitic public, the fact that our Master was compelled to appear upon the stage, and the whole work vanished from before me. I wanted to telegraph to you, and during the performance I discussed with Marie Dönhoff whether we might not join in a telegram, but I could find nothing to say that would have been worthy of you and of my love for you. 'God's voice is heard in the silence of the soul,' say the mystics — but the soul cannot attain to divine silence amid a turmoil and cannot hear the voice of God in public. But I heard it during the rehearsals, and if we were to distribute the works of the spirits (*der Geister*) among us, I should choose *The Mastersingers* for you, *Tristan* for Tausig, *The Valkyrie* for Marie Mouchanoff, *Lohengrin* for my father, and *Tannhäuser* for myself. In it all that holds me spellbound and all that sets me free found a redeeming expression, and, like a child of this world which has strayed far out of its way, I found my home in its music."

From the social point of view, this visit, too, was a brilliant one, and from the artistic point of view, also, the Master attained all that he desired, with the exception of one thing: just — or, rather, decent — criticism. For every possible means of opposition to him was adopted, and the attacks upon him, whether anonymous or avowed, all bore a stamp of utter vulgarity, so that for a time he contemplated abandoning *Lohengrin* and simply going home. But Jauner, the director, approached him imploringly, and even Frau Cosima, who had been entirely in favour of departing, supported the Master in saying that they must see the matter through and finish the work which they had begun. While the rehearsals were going on, there were distractions enough — among other things the baptism of Richter's little daughter, who was given the names Richardis Cosima Eva, thus announcing his adherence to Bayreuth in the clearest possible fashion. But it was a most important thing that the Master himself undertook to coach the performers in *Lohengrin;* for in so doing he came to take a particular pleasure in the chorus and its capabilities, promising upon the spot that he would personally conduct a performance of *Lohengrin* later on for their benefit — a promise which he redeemed in the most brilliant fashion. But he left for home immediately after the first performance, which brought him immense applause, so that he might at least be at Bayreuth for Christmas. They again spent some beautiful days at Wahnfried, and, above all, the children were exuberantly happy at being home once more. But in Vienna and Bayreuth alike Frau Cosima was a prey to her old lamentations and grief and wrote on December 23: " I dressed the tree quietly at sunset, the nuts and apples gleam in a golden light; serene melancholy! How willingly would I endure everything, could I but spare others their trials! I do not complain that these fall to my lot, all that we suffer is just, I grieve for others, for one other." Yet during all this she knew about all that concerned the Master, and took an interest in it, and while he read to her out of Voltaire and Frederick the Great as she dressed the tree, she was thinking all the time about the relation between this great King and Goethe. Christmas Eve came round, which they celebrated quietly, though none the less beautifully this year. She received with delight the beautiful dress which he gave her, but remarks: " Most beautiful of all is what he said to me: ' The only god I have is my love for you.' " And they wound up the evening by reading *Don Quixote* and laughed over it as heartily as though no such thing as grief and cares existed. And on her birthday morning she wrote: " I wish to thank both heaven and earth for letting me come into being, for a mission was vouchsafed to me, and it was granted to me to fulfil it. I wish to beg persistently for forgiveness for the sorrow which I have caused, I mean to bear with courage that which my heart fails me to express."

And she indeed required courage for what came from without. This is not the place to recall all the difficulties which had to be surmounted in order to make the festival performances possible. The time between Christmas and the New Year was filled with these, and every day brought fresh tribulations. Both of them regarded it as a duty to say no more about these than was necessary for their justification in the eyes of the world, and so far as possible they remained faithful to this intention. But in spite of the loyalty of their helpers, they had to call up all their strength if they were not to succumb. Several times, even at the last moment, she, too, thought it would be best to give up the whole performance and pluck up courage to issue a declaration to the public; for no worse sin could be laid to their charge than an excess of confidence in the German spirit. A work such as *The Ring of the Nibelung* might well be created in such a mood of confidence, but it was a far harder matter to give it an effective existence. We have to ask ourselves what Germany was like at that time; and when we read the conversations that the Master had with Frau Cosima, and especially her own opinions, we cannot but stand amazed before their grand and noble-minded attitude — for everything failed them. They had set their hopes first upon the Emperor and then upon Bismarck. The Emperor seems to have been won over to the idea of offering assistance to Bayreuth, but Bismarck opposed it, his idea, as his letters seem to show, having been to bring it into being on another and more grandiose scale by State aid. Apart from broader considerations, he was undoubtedly guided in this by jealousy of the Schleinitz *ménage;* for the hatred between his establishment and that of his minister seemed to grow daily, and since Wahnfried did not lay a petition before the Reichstag, as he desired, he made it known indirectly that he simply would not help them. But the fact that this petition was not made does them great honour, and Wagner was undoubtedly influenced by his wife in declaring that he wanted to arouse the interest of the Emperor and his Chancellor, but not that of the Reichstag, for with that body he wished to have nothing to do. This reveals him in his usual mood of boldness and resolution, but it also shows how firmly Frau Cosima took her stand at her husband's side. She also had the perfectly correct idea that nothing could do more harm to the prestige and credit of Bayreuth than a negative answer from parliament, which she held in such small esteem, and she was more right in this than she knew. And so one anxiety followed upon another.

The New Year came in amid these cares. They were faced with the most serious disaster that could possibly await them; yet they celebrated New Year's Eve gaily with the children, who danced round the lit-up Christmas-tree, and poured melted lead into water — little Siegfried getting a shield, and Isolde a bird's nest — and kept up all the good old customs usual upon this night of wild merriment. But twelve o'clock found them all in bed. She writes apropos of the New Year: " It finds me awake: with all my heart I wish peace to the wicked and fulfilment to the good. I cherish no bad feelings towards anybody, not even towards those who wish me and us evil! I have a great longing for rest! But it is my intention to discharge all my duties." The first day of the year was celebrated by a gay dinner with all their friends in Bayreuth, and the Master made a friendly and cordial speech, in which he said that they were the only people who had given him any pleasant experiences that year; the fact that he had found such friends, he said, was his warrant for success. But he and Frau Cosima were right when they observed: " We lie down to rest amid cares, and wake up to cares, and when we strike the balance of the year, how much it has brought that is bad, how little that is good! . . . How easily I might take it all as meant for me personally," she adds, " if I did not feel that it was all meant for the Cause! " This was perhaps the worst time through which they had passed, yet at this very time he pulled himself together and resumed dictating his biography, and she remarks: " Gay, yet melancholy pictures rise up from the past; my sister hovers between us! . . . It has all vanished." But we cannot but admire the Master's point of view, as well as his pride, when he said that none but a man like Bismarck could help them, and that without this they were lost. Yet he weighed every expedient with a view to organizing the festival themselves and doing all they could to carry it through. He thought over new plans and spoke of concerts which he was prepared to give for the benefit of the festival funds, should certain guarantees be forthcoming. How beautifully she remarks, with the noble equanimity which always descended upon her when she was writing to her friend: " You use the same terms as I do, almost word for word, to characterize the wonderful quality of a nature to whom it has been granted not only to put his sufferings into words, but also to overcome them and to persist in the service of an idea and in his faith in it, even when the melancholy aspect of affairs might make such a belief appear almost absurd. May Heaven bless him and grant us peace! My life has become so regular again that one can hardly believe it. The children's lessons and keeping the accounts (*la comptabilité*) take up all my time. As I was giving Boni a lesson on the Emperor Henry II yesterday, Fidi wrote to Lulu: 'Mamma gets cleverer every day.' The dear children are really a great help to me, I do not mean in acquiring cleverness, but in attaining a serene peace of mind, and they have repaid me a thousandfold, with high interest, the little that I have done for them. And talking about interest brings me to the question: did I tell you that Herr Tribert has suddenly paid me my 40,000 francs, to my great surprise, for I had not counted upon it? " Thus she was able to maintain her serenity and to look at everything with the calm which is the mark of a great woman. She had heard that Hans von Bülow was thinking of buying a house at Meiningen and marrying a beautiful Russian lady, upon which she writes: " I have heard H. v. B. himself mention the name of the Russian lady. How glad I should be to believe this news! But in this connexion courage quite fails me, and I suspect that this cord in me has snapped and will never cease to ache: but God's will be done. Even the continents are now placing themselves in subjection to the nations."

Next came their visit to Vienna to redeem the pledge given by Wagner to the chorus of the Court Theatre, and the acceptance of the American request to write a festival march for the celebration of Independence Day, upon which the Master at once set to work, though it was by no means an easy piece of work for him. But one very characteristic incident now occurred, which brings home to us in a special way the fascination of Richard Wagner's methods of work, and which Frau Cosima describes on February 16 as follows: " After dinner he showed me the latest page in his manuscript-book, which ought to have been American, and said that here was the chorus sung by the women to Parsifal: '*Komm, schöner Knabe* (Come, fair boy).' " Thus in the middle of this casual composition there arose one of the loveliest ideas in his *Parsifal*, about which Frau Cosima remarks: " He thinks a great deal about P. and is depressed that there is so much to keep him from it." But, in spite of all, a visit to Vienna was urgently necessary, and to Berlin too, for a performance of *Tristan* was to be given there for the benefit of Bayreuth, by command of the Emperor himself, thanks, in part, to the brilliant advocacy of their beautiful friend. Even before they started, she felt obliged to send word of this to Hans von Bülow, her comment being: " I am writing Hans an account of how our artistic enterprises stand at present. He affects me to such an extent that it leaves me exhausted. The only feeling to which my heart clings as to a treasure is that, while I wish all whom I love more good fortune than is their due, I never have wished that things should go better for myself. The more deeply I suffer, the stronger grows this strange pleasure which I feel in pain. I would readily accept it as a condition that, just as the mists of earth become the fruitful rain, so the tears that fall from my eyes might descend in dews of blessing on the children. Only then suffering would be a mere mirage (*Fata Morgana*), and it must be the starkest reality."

And so they travelled to Vienna, where they arrived early on the morning of March 1 and were given a joyful welcome by their friends, and most of all by the chorus. On the very next day, the 2nd, took place the performance of *Lohengrin*, at which the Master's " magical conducting " worked wonders, she herself remarking: " The orchestra played the Prelude as I have never heard it played before, the chorus is magnificent, unfortunately the singers were less than mediocre — inaccurate, with poor voices and no delivery. I realize more and more how impossible it is to graft anything upon the existing theatre." On the 4th, after all sorts of entertainments and ceremonies in his honour — one of which took place at the station, where the chorus sang the " *Wachet auf* (Awake!) " wonderfully in the waiting-room — they went on to Berlin. Immediately upon their arrival they heard from Marie von Schleinitz that nothing could be expected from the Imperial Chancellor, and when she went to see the costumes for Bayreuth, which were to have exhibited her own taste most of all, Frau Cosima had another disappointment, about which she writes: "They are very fine — varied, yet simple — they reveal a whole civilization to one. I should have preferred a more mystic and allusive quality. All that has to be conceived in terms of the plastic arts seems to me to be a thing apart from the effect of the music and the tragedy. But since it had got to be represented plastically, it could not have been conceived in a more beautiful and artistic way."

And now, in the middle of the preparations and rehearsals for *Tristan,* a sad piece of news reached her. Frau von Schleinitz brought her the newspaper with the notice of her mother's death. She had received no news from Paris, for a letter from Claire was waiting for her at Bayreuth, and she did not receive it till March 9. It announced that her mother was ill, but not dangerously so. A telegram from Schuré in reply to the Master's inquiries now informed them that her mother had been buried on the previous day. All inquiries addressed to her stepsister remained unanswered, and she makes the following entry in her diary: "I visited the churchyard with Richard, going over the same ground as I had trod sixteen years ago behind my brother's bier. The grave is well tended, I mean to have a railing placed round it. . . . Gloomy meditations," she notes, "days of silence." Thus she pacified her feelings, to all appearance; but a letter which she wrote many years afterwards to her friend and son-in-law Houston Chamberlain shows most beautifully how her mother's image rose before her eyes: "What you tell me — namely, that you find something clear-cut in my way of expressing myself, and what you say about the literary tendencies that you detect in me — made memories of my youth rise up once more before me. I had learnt to know nothing but the French classics at school when, at the age of fifteen, I made the acquaintance of my mother and went to see her for a few hours every week with my sister. She was so good as to profit by these hours to give us much information out of the books which she valued highly, especially out of Goethe, and afterwards such things in Plato as she considered to be within my grasp. It was through her that I came to know the *Antigone*. And when she had read enough, she would take us to the Louvre, and also, when the two old ladies who were in charge of us would allow it, to the theatre. We saw *Macbeth* excellently performed by an English company, then Madame Ristori as Maria Stuart and Myrrha, and finally Roche in *Polyeucte* and *Le Misanthrope*. The last thing which we saw with her was the Duc de Luynes's restoration of the Athene of Phidias. I cannot describe what an impression these Sundays always made upon me, I can still see myself devouring with my eyes my mother's wonderful library, and when we returned to the narrow world of our repressed and strict existence with two seventy-year-old governesses, the impressions remained fresh in our memory as though we had returned from the realms of the blest."

Here we find this noble woman's love for her mother just as it swayed her feelings during these days of silence. Then came Schuré's letter, describing the funeral and the great tributes paid to her who was dead; but she still remained without more detailed news, and stifled her own feelings, for she saw her husband doubly agitated, by the orchestral rehearsals for *Tristan,* and by the instrumentation of his Philadelphia march (*American Centennial March*), which had to be ready by March 15. During their leisure hours they went together to Charlottenburg to visit the tomb of Queen Louise, whose monument revealed this glorious woman in " all the loveliness of sorrow." Rehearsals proceeded, and on March 25 came the performance, which was most brilliant, the Emperor and Empress appearing at it with the whole court, for it was the venerable Emperor's birthday. Frau Cosima was with Count Pourtalès in the director's box, from which she listened to *Tristan,* the piece which aroused in her so many memories dating from the most eventful period of her life. Its success was enormous; and when she appeared at dinner at Mimi's house on the next day, she heard that the Emperor had declared *Tristan* "*magnifique*" and that the Crown Prince, too, was taking a serious interest in it. But that very evening they left Berlin and returned to Bayreuth by way of Leipzig. Her mother's death naturally meant fresh worries for her. The lawyer sent word that the property which should have come to her was in great danger owing to a number of clauses in the will, upon which she remarks: " A sad outlook on every side! . . . I do all that in me lies to face the loss, while showing forbearance towards all that is sacred." With this object in view she appealed to her mother's friend Tribert, who undertook to represent her interests and even thanked her for being allowed to do so.

They left Berlin full of the impressions of this great success of *Tristan,* the first seven performances of which had awakened an old memory in Wagner's mind of how, long ago, when he had made his début in Berlin with *Rienzi* with such poor success, his old friend Franck had said: " You ought to have started with *Tannhäuser* in Berlin." And the view was now expressed that *Tristan* marked the opening of his era of success. The director of the Opera, indeed, thought otherwise, and only grudgingly yielded to the Emperor's wish that such great sums should be sacrificed for such an ephemeral work. The newspapers made their usual comments on the occasion, alleging that the Master had been appointed general director of music in Prussia, like Spontini, Meyerbeer, and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and was therefore going to sell his theatre to the *Reich.* They played every mean trick that could be devised. But one thing that Frau Cosima might have expected to receive at this juncture never came — a word from her father about her mother's death. On the strength of the accounts which he had received from Marie von Hohenlohe about the success at Vienna, he had written to her as lately as December 1875, expressing the opinion that in future all the theatres would fall in with the methods in which Wagner was now leading the way. " The period of half-measures and mismanagement due to routine has broken down: when a mighty genius produces a work, the question is how to get it performed as he understands and conceives it. There are already enough inconsistencies inseparable from presentation in the theatre." The letter was couched in rather formal terms and was to some extent in harmony with the tone of his correspondence with the Princess, who still seemed to dominate Liszt's attitude towards the mother of his children. All that he wrote to the

Princess about her was: " I could not have shed more tears over her passing than I did over her existence." And he expressed the opinion that Madame d'Agoult had had " a taste — in fact, a positive passion — for shams, except for a few moments of ecstasy, of which she could not bear to be reminded afterwards. . . . On the whole, at my age the outward signs of mourning are quite as embarrassing as congratulations. The world goes its own way. One lives in it, one works, one bears one's sorrow and anguish, one abandons oneself to hope or enthusiasm, and one dies as best one may. The sacrament which seems to me the most to be desired is extreme unction." This is all he could find to say to the Princess on March 14 — that is, in the midst of the days of mourning and shortly after the burial of the woman to whom he had meant so much and who had meant so much to him.

He said nothing to his daughter, who on her return to Bayreuth accepted the situation there as she found it, and submitted to the cares which harassed her daily; for it was not her way to make an undue parade of outward mourning — indeed, during the festival she to some extent laid the signs of it aside, and it is interesting to see that, even now, she was able to write to her friend: " You will have received our Master's letter, beloved friend. He could not help telling you something, at least, of what we say to each other daily, and I was glad that he felt like this. On the whole things are going on quite tolerably with us. Loldi was eleven yesterday, in token of which she was given a parrot (I hope it is not a ' symbol and an augury,' but, as Chateaubriand adds: ' Shakspere was born in the Eagle Inn '). I could not possibly answer Frau von M.'s question about *Tristan* otherwise than by a hymn to Berlin — that is, to — you know whom. In doing so I was guilty of the weakness of a side-glance in the direction of Vienna. She writes that my father arrived at Weimar in excellent health, but since she does not say a word about where he is to stay, all sorts of odd ideas occurred to me, though I do not know what suggested them. Marie Dönhoff also wrote of my father's excellent spirits and said how well he looked, but I have heard nothing from him personally. Lenbach has been in Vienna for three days and has now settled in Munich, all afire for work, saying that he is another man. I have heard nothing about my affairs since Tribert's letter, except that É. O. wrote saying that he, too, is of opinion that I have the first claim on the estate. I was greatly moved by an article of Schuré's. Heigel has sent me a volume of short stories in which the first, entitled *Benedictus*, has a Countess Cosima as its heroine. When one has an unusual name, it is very odd to see it borne by another and used in this fashion, rather as if one saw one's clothes worn by somebody else. And clothes remind me of him who designs them. May I ask you for Worth's address? I should like to order a white dress of him for the summer, unless you think it might be even remotely interpreted as a lack of respect for my mother's memory for me to go into half-mourning so early as the festival season." So she gossips on; but her real feeling comes through at the end: " As for me, I am so tired."

She had, indeed, no time to brood over her own affairs; there were cares and preparations enough without that, for the festival was rapidly approaching. Nothing was guaranteed as yet, nor were the expenses covered for more than the period of the rehearsals, the enormous day-to-day expenses of which had first to be secured somehow or other. Then came the question of accommodation, which naturally caused the Master great concern and was a constant source of anxiety up to the time when the rehearsals began. There were other anxieties in plenty, quite apart from Liszt, who entirely ignored Bayreuth for the present and had broken off his correspondence with his daughter, which was usually so animated. But every call found her at her post and she stood her ground magnificently the whole summer through. It was not without justice that she was nicknamed " the Margravine of Bayreuth "; for no princess could have discharged her social duties more brilliantly, towards both the artists and the visitors, and, above all, towards the royal personages who were now presenting themselves one after the other. Frau Cosima had now, so to speak, to assume the additional role of master of the ceremonies towards them and organize everything in due form so that nobody should be slighted or hurt. What she most enjoyed in her leisure hours was to gossip with her friend, in her letters to whom can be felt a deep undertone of rejoicing. The preliminary effects of the festival now began to be felt in Bayreuth, of course accompanied by an opposition movement, directed chiefly from Munich. Liszt was right when he said how important the Master's own efforts had been for the success of the Wagner concerts in Vienna, adding that things had begun well in Munich, but that it had afterwards come to be considered the right thing to drop Wagner and work in opposition to his own particular views. And now at the beginning of May yet another difficulty arose: a few harmless cases of typhus in the military hospital at Bayreuth were used by the newspapers as an excuse for a scare, and in writing to Frau von Schleinitz Frau Cosima said that people there were as stupid about it as Beckmesser. But they had taken advantage of this incident quite prematurely, so that the momentary anxiety of the visitors could still be allayed, though as a matter of fact the news did for a while check the sale of the *Patronatsscheine*. May 22 was only celebrated in a quiet way at home; but about this time the restaurant attached to the theatre was opened, and a few days later the scaffolding was taken down, apropos of which Frau Cosima writes: " The effect is sublime, from the auditorium and the stage alike it is equally dreamlike, inducing a mood of melancholy exaltation. How little real sympathy attends the Spirit which is here revealed! The sunset glow falls finely on the building. Nay, it is the flush of dawn." And she developed to her friend in greater detail the idea that the building had been erected only for the few, while at the same time expressing her feeling that it was doomed to ruin and destruction. Such was the extreme melancholy — we may almost say, the alarming pessimism — which then swayed this wonderful woman, whose mission it was, not only to preserve this house for her husband's works, but also to bring about the realization and consummation of his idea of the Festival Theatre and festival performances.

And so June came round, and the rehearsals began. Everything sounded wonderful and the singers produced a splendid effect in their costumes. " What we had thought to be impossible has really come true through the magic of genius. I am overcome by a feeling of nameless woe. My thoughts dart their rays afar, but roll back heavily like clouds, only to break in tears and rise once more in prayer." And there was another of whom she thought in this connexion. " I have been listening to the birds. Bülow's bird, the oriole, is singing." Thus she celebrated Whitsuntide, writing after the rehearsals of the Rhine-maidens' scene: " For the first time the orchestra was heard again. Now they are all coming." And every day bound the singers in closer ties, not only to one another and to Wahnfried, but most of all to the work. And if the Master remained fresh, in spite of all his excitements, fatigue, and efforts, though kept at work from early morning till evening, it was owing to the virtue that went forth from this wonderful woman, who ruled her house with discrimination and confidence, and whose influence could also be felt at the rehearsals in the temple at Bayreuth which was now approaching completion. Thus her material cares were kept at bay by the prodigious effect of this work and her inexpressible sense of its magic, which none felt so much as she, who was making every effort to bring the work to a fortunate issue.

The great days at Bayreuth in the year 1876 have been described at ample length elsewhere, and it does not fall within the scope of this work to go over the ground again. On the contrary, its task is merely to throw light upon the life and ideas of this unique woman during these great days and to bring them into prominence. In general a distinction must be drawn between the home life of this pair of artists and their activities in the cause of the festival. How wonderful it is that at the time when the rehearsals were beginning, the book which most interested the Master, and Frau Cosima as well, should have been the official account of the war by the German General Staff, and that while looking at his theatre he should have said to her that the only thing he still loved and honoured was the Army. This enables us to realize how his mental vision embraced the whole world and what an effect was produced upon them both by the work which she was first able to grasp as a whole now that it was being performed. Nothing could be more significant than the fact that at the rehearsal on May 30, after meditating for a long time, he asked his wife whether in *The Rhinegold* he had not made Wotan, in saluting Valhalla with the words " *so nenn' ich die Burg* (thus greet I the fort)," snatch up a sword which Fafner had pushed aside from the hoard, and which Wotan now thrusts into his scabbard. Alberich had had it forged for the combat against the giants and the gods. She agreed after a moment's thought, and thus a new and important link was established within the work; and though far too much has been said about the significance of this, it sprang solely and wholly from a subsequent reflection of the Master in conversation with his wife.

The rehearsals went off in an atmosphere which, though heated and oppressive, was none the less grandiose. Taking offence and sulking play a leading part in theatrical life, and nobody in touch with the theatre takes such things seriously, still less tragically; and here, too, conflict followed conflict. What made things difficult was that building was still in progress, and work was still going on at the scenery, which gave the whole thing a somewhat uncanny impression, which both of them, however, succeeded in overcoming; and when personal incidents arose, Frau Cosima would get into her carriage in the morning and drive round to all the people who had to be appeased — and who were perhaps only waiting for the well-known Wahnfried carriage to stop at their door in order to be reconciled. For Frau Cosima this was all training for the future, and it received a further extension owing to the fact that she had to attend the rehearsals in place of the Master when he was indisposed, and take vigorous steps there, too. We know that on these occasions she exercised a strong restraint over herself, if only for conscientious reasons, and in speaking of this period in after years she said, like Kundry: " There served I (*Da diente ich*)."[1] It was this feeling that prompted the words which she wrote in her diary apropos of the rehearsals on June 15: " Rehearsal without him. But when he is not there, there is nothing to be done. Goodwill and industry are of no avail."

It was while on her way to the " green hill " on which stood the theatre that the faithful Feustel met her and asked whether she was still inclined to pledge her own fortune as security; for things were in a very bad way. She naturally consented, and when she got home, wrote at once to her step-sister Claire and her father. Feustel was timorous by nature and opinionated to the verge of obstinacy; and he had just been putting pressure upon the Master to the same effect; but the Master had replied somewhat in the terms suggested to him by Frau Cosima on the previous day: " The main thing is that we should carry things through." If there were a deficit afterwards, he said, he could apply to the Reichstag, and to the princes, too. This was the only right point of view at the time, and Frau Cosima gave him the lead gallantly and boldly. She was in the theatre at all the rehearsals, she was present at all inquiries and explanations, and though she might be annoyed over details, she none the less rejoiced at the wonderful unity which continued to develop at the rehearsals. It is true that she could not get used to Richter's tempi and said: " He insists too much on his four-in-a-bar (*Er mahlt zu viel 4/4 Takt*)." And so the first cycle of rehearsals was drawing to its close, when, at the last moment, Malwida appeared. Frau Cosima listened to *The Twilight of the Gods* with unspeakable emotion; but she was none the less horrified at the effect of the final tableau, designed by Döpler: " I am greatly depressed at this. A mania for archæological trivialities finds expression in it, to the detriment of the tragic and mysterious. I should like to have the whole thing much more simple and primitive, so that it all remains a ' simulacrum.' "

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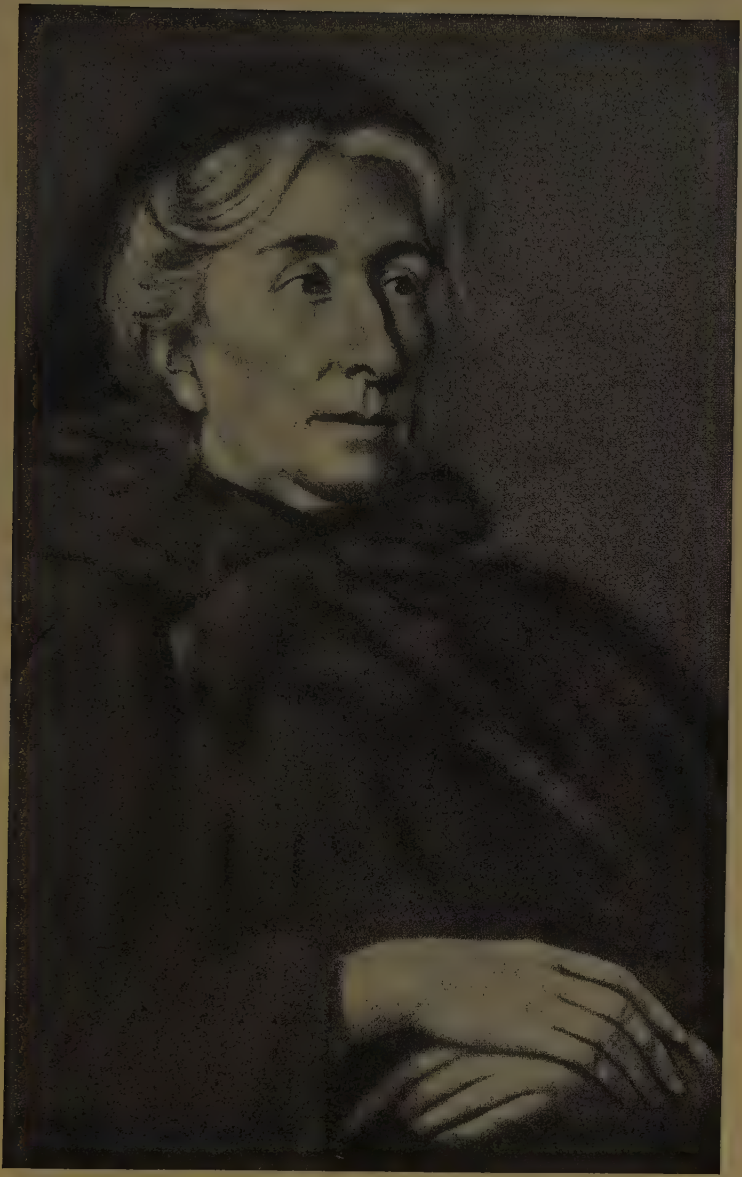
[1] *Parsifal*, II, i.—Tr.

With Malwida had arrived Nietzsche's book *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth.* The Master naturally had no time to read it, but Frau Cosima devoted a night to it and on the following morning at once telegraphed Nietzsche her thanks, which were highly enthusiastic, for the Master had felt as she did about it. But it is touching to read how, on returning home one night from some social function, she saw him step to the window: " He saluted the stars, and especially the seven Pleiads, which had been the propitious constellation of his life and were glittering beautifully, saying to them: ' Kindly stars, protect my wife and children! But do with me what you will.' He said that he had been thinking about his death. He embraced me fervently, saying that nobody knew how much I was to be thanked for everything."

Now began the great pilgrimage to Bayreuth. The rehearsals were in part thrown open to the public. And now fresh clashes arose, which led to threats of resignation. Frau Cosima alone kept her head above water, though she was acquiring a deeper



COSIMA WAGNER

and deeper realization of the inadequacy of the presentation, which she expressed in the dictum: " The performance will fall as far short of the work as the work is in advance of our age." It would not have been surprising if they had lost their heads at Wahnfried, for there was no lack of irritability in other quarters too, or of wounded vanity on the part of the artists. Most egregious of all was the conduct towards the great lady of Döpler (who had designed the costumes) when all she asked was that Siegmund's garment should not be quite so tight, and that the robes of Gutrune's attendants should not be so gaily coloured. And now, she says, the poor man became so violent and rude that she realized for the first time with what a bungler she had to do. " The costumes," she writes, " absolutely remind one of Indian chiefs and in addition to their ethnographical absurdity bear the stamp of a paltry and theatrical tastelessness. I am in despair about it, and a little shocked, too, at the professor's manners." In such questions as these her own taste was thrown into strong prominence and was never at fault. She did succeed in averting the worst disasters and insisted on modifying the ridiculous costume, with a cloak and shoulder-straps, designed in Berlin for Alberich.

But there was another thing that made her heart ache: that is, Hans von Bülow's fate and sufferings. After prodigious triumphs and incomparable successes in America, he had returned home a broken man. He was spending the first half of July at the clinic in Godesberg, so Frau Cosima heard, where his sister had brought him on the advice of a German doctor in London. This was quite contrary to his original intentions; for he had meant to avoid Germany during those summer days when the idea for which he, too, had struggled and battled was finding its realization at Bayreuth; and he wrote to Pohl, in bitter terms: " It is only with difficulty that I can surmount a feeling of shame at having let myself get so thoroughly played out (*zu solcher Ausgespieltheit gebracht*), and that this should happen in the year of Bayreuth, of all times, when I had made up my mind to stay in America, on account of what I may call the moral impossibility for both sides that I, a Wagnerian *de la veille*, should not attend the festival. This is really the bitterest thing of all. But in the utterly ruined state of my health to stay in America would be slow suicide. Yet perhaps, after all, that is the course which I ought to have preferred." An invitation to the festival had been sent him from Bayreuth in the most delicate and tactful terms, and at an earlier date he had even been offered the musical directorship. Now he was lying sick, nursed by his sister, who hated Bayreuth and all connected with it, and most of all her brother's former wife. How different were the feelings of the latter! On August 3, in the very midst of these great events, she writes in her diary: "Deep inward melancholy. Hans is said to be very, very ill at Godesberg! . . . The news hangs over my spirit like an overwhelming shadow, all joy is unthinkable for the future, only patience and work." And there was no lack of these. Their more intimate friends as well as the wider circle of patrons had already appeared, and the King announced his arrival for August 5, upon which she writes: "Richard went to meet the King at midnight, I accompanied him to the station in front of the Eremitage, then Richard drove off with the King and returned late, but most enchanted with his friendly reception." At the general rehearsal the King sent for this noble woman and told her that she need never have doubted that he would remain true to them. Everything now turned out as it was bound to do. The King was enchanted with the performances, but departed to make way for the Emperor, who was received with as great jubilation as the King had been. And now Frau Cosima writes the following account of the meeting between the German Emperor and the Master: "He was summoned to the presence of the Emperor, who praised everything highly and said jestingly that if he had been one of the orchestra, Wagner would never have got him down under there [he was alluding to the covered-in orchestra]. He regretted that he was unable to stay any longer, to which Wagner replied that his graciousness did not depend upon time and space. The Grand Duchess of Baden said, however, that she was staying; upon which Richard declared: 'Then you will represent the graciousness,' and the Emperor said jestingly: 'That was a hit at me.' He said good-bye and took a step backwards, but did not notice the doorstep and stumbled badly, so that it was only by exerting all his strength that Richard was able to support him; and he is convinced that this fall backwards would have been the death of his imperial master."

Now that the ice had been broken by the Emperor's visit, prince after prince arrived. They came and went, most of them knocking at the door of Wahnfried, and not last came the Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro, who was announced last thing at night and received in state by Frau Cosima. And so the time went by like a dream, though it was indeed a strenuous dream. Festivity followed festivity. The apartments at Wahnfried, the gardens of Wahnfried, stood brilliantly open, and this noble woman's house always appeared in the best and most beautiful light. Everyone was enchanted and full of enthusiasm, most of all for her character and noble manner. She had the joy — which was, however, at the same time a grave anxiety — of knowing that her father was by her side all the time. At the great banquet which closed the whole cycle, the Master honoured him in the most touching terms, as the man who had believed in him, and on this evening Frau Cosima could clasp her husband in her arms with ecstasy and enthusiasm. But in other quarters there was only too much discord and agitation, so that it was with a great sigh of relief that she wrote in her diary on August 30: " And so the program has been carried out in the most amazing way — a program which nobody would have supposed to be possible. At the close Richard spoke a few beautiful words to the public and presented his artists to them, saying that it was they who had given him courage, by believing in him. Richard took leave of the King, while I was left alone with my father."

And now everybody departed. There was no lack of discords, and the retrospect was even less gratifying than the most hostile critic could have expressed. But this arose from their intense sincerity. Thus on September 9 Frau Cosima wrote in her diary: " Said good-bye to Mathilde Maier, the last of our friends. Afterwards, in the evening, a long discussion of the performances and of our experiences. Richard will have no more of those swells (*Matadoren*) Betz and Niemann. Betz was so furious at not getting a call that he came to treat his part with positive contempt. Brandt had not come up to his expectations. Richter was not sure of a single tempo. Affliction! Collapse! Richard very sad, he says he would like to die." A slight estrangement seems to have arisen even between them and Frau von Schleinitz. In later years this noble woman, who knew so well both the world and the human heart, pronounced the dictum: " Bayreuth is the grave of friendships "; and perhaps she was recalling the year 1876. But shortly before departing with her husband for a holiday in Italy, Frau Cosima wrote to her friend: " I am leaving the Master, or, as my father called him, the Unbelievable one (*den Unglaublichen*), late in the evening, so as to thank you, my dearest friend. I have to be very grudging of my time, for on Thursday we are off for a considerable period, and there is still much to arrange here. Our journey will take us by way of Munich to Verona, where we shall arrive on Friday evening and stay for two days. We shall spend a day at Vicenza and a week at Venice, where I had hoped to see you. Then to Bologna, and along the coast to Sorrento, where we intend to settle: the children are coming with us and are already quite wild with excitement. For my part, I leave here in a dream and have passed my time here in a dream. Perhaps the sun may succeed in doing what my impressions and experiences have not done! Since on embracing you for the last time it was granted to me to relieve the tension which had arisen between us, I was happy to say good-bye, a thing which has always seemed the hardest of all to me. I have to admit that there was a sad period when I had the feeling that we were estranged from one another and could no longer catch the sound of each other's voices. May you be spared what I suffered at the thought that the relations between us might be only of a casual nature, at the mercy of chance to break. I was told that you took what, ' in a friendly spirit,' you called my ' readiness for sacrifice ' for a sign of hardness. If this hardness was used against you, I beg with all my heart for forgiveness. In one's youth, when one is hardly used, or thinks that one has been, one becomes sad and harsh, for one has life still before one and considers oneself to be something superior to the ordinary; but in later life it makes one's heart heavy — for who was ever exempt from causing pain to others, and then one does not feel justified in being harsh, let one's ideas be what they may. The reason you and I kept silence — you say 'we,' but I think it was I — was because, if I had spoken, I should have seemed to myself like K.E. So accept my most heart-felt greetings, fervent and true as none but I can feel. We are already working here at the performances for next year. If you thank the creator of the work for it, how much more must we not heap praises upon him for its realization! It is absolutely incredible that it really happened, and if we take as our motto 'In the beginning was the word,' you must accept Faust's correction: 'In the beginning was the deed.' It is incredible how well you succeeded in everything; it almost makes one believe in magic. I have no need of magic, for I believe in miracles."

CHAPTER IX

PARSIFAL

BUT WHAT took place was no miracle. At this point we may take a survey of the subsequent development of affairs at Bayreuth; and we shall see that now, at the decisive moment, a personality emerges who must be regarded as the real saviour of Bayreuth: Feustel's son-in-law Adolf von Gross. During the rehearsals and the festival he had already taken upon himself the whole brunt of the work, which did not in reality justify the marked pessimism to which his father-in-law gave such vigorous expression and for which there was really no such very great occasion. The measures adopted by Adolf Gross, on the other hand, were calm and energetic, and he drew his calm, not so much from any security afforded by circumstances, as from the greatness of the work and of the two persons for whom he was working, at whose side he continued to stand like a very paladin during the whole of his long and full life. It really cheers one to look on at the drama of his life, now that Bayreuth actually "bore the treasure safe within its heart (*den sicheren Schatz im Herzen trug*)," if we may put this interpretation upon the poet's words. So while Feustel continued to carry on the correspondence with the Master, Adolf Gross not only devoted himself to setting matters on a sound basis and exploiting the possibilities of the situation, but had already conceived the plan which was to prove the salvation of the cause. He therefore allowed the Master's family to go off quietly to Italy, and, as Frau Cosima's answers show, his letters were, at any rate, fairly calculated to set her mind at rest and contributed wonderfully to the enjoyment of their journey and the good effects of their stay in Italy. Frau Cosima was so sensitive to all that was great and beautiful that it must have been a magnificent recompense to her for all the efforts that the festival had cost her, not to be constantly distracted from a thorough enjoyment of her holiday by urgent and harassing cares. She now saw Italy, if not for the first time, yet in a very different way from that in which she had seen it before. Verona, the first Italian town in which she arrived, enchanted her at once, and she carried away from it intoxicating impressions of the Giardino Giusti with its secular pines, which she called "the aristocratic tree *par excellence*." But Venice fascinated her still more. "Sad, sad is the city," she writes, "in which the inhabitants are as vermin, wholly alien to the various noble piles of which it is composed. But I do not fix my eyes on this, the living element, only on what is eternal. There are few people with whom I have found it so hard to part as this city. It has cast its spell over me, in a way that I know no other will do." This is like a presentiment of those unspeakably dark days which she had to go through here in February 1883, when she was to realize to the utmost the deep grief which seized upon her even as early as this.

We need not describe their tour, of which Glasenapp has given such a detailed account. Frau Cosima, indeed, saw and enjoyed Italy to the full and could, like Goethe, have left us the most beautiful accounts of the country, as is shown by her description of their expedition to Capri: the ride to the Villa Tiberio, the halt at the famous leap, and how the women driving the asses danced the tarantella — the elder sister with great passion, the other with more restraint, because her husband was so jealous. "Our ride home through the narrow streets was like an Arab wedding-procession. It was all glorious. The contrast between the abject poverty of the people and the luxuriance of nature fills one with astonishment. But this poverty would not exist were it not for the foreigners who are there to be begged from. I was ashamed at having made them dance the tarantella before me. Our return home was accompanied by falling stars and a glittering sea. An incomparable effect. The white house amid the green. The glorious flowers, and later the smooth sea, a perfect summer night. Richard is asking himself whether he is to undertake the performances again. After distributing decorations to all who took part in them, not one of the royal personages has asked Richard what they can do for him, how they can support him or back him up."

It was now that the idea actually occurred to him of pulling down the theatre at Bayreuth, allowing it to disappear like a fleeting vision, and himself assuming responsibility for the deficit. In this we may trace the full nobility and dignity of this high-minded woman, even during these hard and crushing days. It was a comfort to her when on October 10 — the most fateful day in her life, on which, twenty-three years before, she had first seen the Master at her father's side, just as Senta sees the Flying Dutchman at the side of Daland — she received the news that the forty thousand francs which she had inherited from her mother were to be paid to her. In accordance with her promise, she was prepared to sacrifice this sum to the festival and by this renunciation to offer a tribute to this great year on her children's behalf as well. It is almost as though this had been a relief to her feelings, and she seems to have enjoyed Sorrento all the more for it during the days which followed; indeed, she became quite at home there and writes in her diary: " I am becoming fonder and fonder of the point here. The lanes running between two walls, with the trees rising above them, the gorges and crags, the olive groves, are all so homelike to me, and I no longer hear any unpleasant news." And so she and her husband read Sismondi's *History of the Italian Republics,* which fascinated him, but her as well; and it is curious how the visions of Barbarossa which had once transported the Master from the plain of Roncaglia to the myth of the Nibelungs once more rose up before them. But now he knew, as it were, the destiny and the guilt which had fettered that strong hero too, and it was Frau Cosima who drew his attention to the parallel between Barbarossa, Arnold of Brescia, and Wotan, and the guilt, common to all of them, which brought ruin to them and to their world.

But she lived in communion with nature and rejoiced alike in sunshine and raging storm. This feeling for nature was a happiness to her. She would walk for hours along the shores of the gulf. Italy became a sort of ideal world to her — a world full of charm and satisfaction. But grave news, not only about financial matters, reached her from the outside world. The monstrous fury of the attacks on the art-work of Bayreuth could not leave even the peaceful walls of Sorrento untouched, and she writes: "The books and Richard! Those which are significant and do him justice, and then the rest, incomprehensible in their stupidity and perfidy. They stir up all men's evil passions. Thus much their cleverness can achieve, though it leaves them so lamentably in the lurch when they set foot in the ideal world. Another one remarks, by way of a sneer at my father, that my brother Daniel had absolutely no talent." This was what hurt her most during these October days, for it brought back memories of the sick-bed of this wonderful being, to whom she was still attached by the same deep love. And as she watched the olive-harvest and listened to the people improvising their lovely, monotonous chants, she felt a profound loneliness, and it all seemed to her "like a forgotten day." She now begged the Master to forget the whole "*Nibelungennot* (sorrows of the Nibelungs)" and set to work on a new composition; and, curiously enough, his thoughts were once more turning towards a symphony of mourning for those who had fallen in the war, which he meant to base on a theme which he had thought of for *Romeo and Juliet:* "He said that he saw a bier being borne into a hall, advancing gradually in such a way that individual grief became lost, little by little, in the general suffering. Not till after this would come the song of triumph. But who would feel this as he does?" Thus the sunshine and the beauty produced a curiously grave mood in them both, and when they wandered in the olive groves, she had a vision of Christ on the Mount of Olives and recalled the words: "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done."

In the mean time a welcome guest had arrived, who was once again to prepare a home and a resting-place here for another. This was Malwida, who had come on in advance of Nietzsche, because he was ill. They saw one another but seldom, it is true, for duty kept their friend at a distance. For the rest, Frau Cosima writes to Marie von Schleinitz towards the close of these days at Sorrento: " In bidding farewell to Sorrento, dearest friend, I send you my greetings at the same time. We leave early tomorrow morning, but shall spend a few more days at Naples and then settle in Rome for a few weeks. It would perhaps be more sensible to write to you from our next stopping-place, and not amid conditions which the children and servants regard as the occasion for a general relaxation of discipline. But you might perhaps be surprised at a long silence, especially after your last letter, and so I am trying to thank you and send you my love amid cries, draughts, and so on, as well as the most exasperating questions. Was it not you who were present when Professor Bernays announced to me: ' I should not like to say anything insignificant in this place ' ? This comparison was suggested to me by noticing what a bad letter-writer I have become. Not that I am looking for something important to say, like our queer professor! But the great distance which separates us no more admits of mere gossip than of a description of the overpoweringly strong impressions produced by another country, a new sky — in short, a completely new world, which can only possess an ideal existence in a friend's eyes. And since my lord and our Master has already expressed his thanks both to the minister and to you, dearest, in a way which neither distance nor appearances can affect, I have been thinking quietly about you and wishing you all that you deserve — in which I differ so much from Hamlet as to mean something particularly good. However, you want to hear from me again and will not take it amiss that this letter has so little in it. I think the business which forms the serious background to our feelings was set forth in the letter to the minister, and you will probably have heard through Herr von Radowitz that my husband has written to him, in pursuance of some words which he [the Legationsrat] addressed to him last time they met at Bayreuth, but that he has not so far been favoured with a reply. Against this background, however, stand out more pleasing conditions, in the shape of occasional moods of great merriment and the children's unvarying good health. We spent a week with Malwida and shall take leave of her at Naples, for, with that almost fabulous kindness of hers, which in practice is always being abused in a very real way, she has once again taken upon herself a mass of responsibilities, in which she is held fast as in a net. But we chattered a great deal during that week, just as I imagine a soldier in the French Army must have eaten after the Russian campaign — that is, without stopping. — You will probably have heard from the Countess Voss that we met in Venice. She is so kind and kindly disposed towards me that I have cause to think gratefully of you again in this connexion, for I was quite aware that this budding friendship had its origin in your loving thoughts and words about me. What a beautiful letter the minister has again written to my husband! I hope very much that you read it, for it is as unique in form as in the sentiments in which it had its origin. It is as finely turned, says our Master, as Petrarch's letters seemed to him to be — for he is studying a great deal here and could give you lectures on the whole history of Italy, just as last winter he was absorbed in that of the Arabs. The Idealist [1] has just come in and charges me to reciprocate your greetings to her most cordially."

As Frau Cosima says, they now pursued their journey to Rome. She had tried in vain to induce the Master to continue dictating his biography in the quietude of Sorrento, amid that world of beauty; but he had been too restless, and for the moment there was nothing that could fix his attention to such an extent that outward things were powerless to recall him constantly to the profane world. So, as soon as what is called winter began to appear at Sorrento, they moved on and returned to Rome. Rome, too, made a great impression upon Frau Cosima, though quite a different one from that produced upon her by the primitive quality of Naples and the south of Italy. She was of course deeply affected by everything, though at first sight St. Peter's caused her nothing but the deepest disappointment. But she found in Rome a delightful social life, which had a soothing effect upon her. They frequented the house of Keudell, the German ambassador, who had once introduced music into

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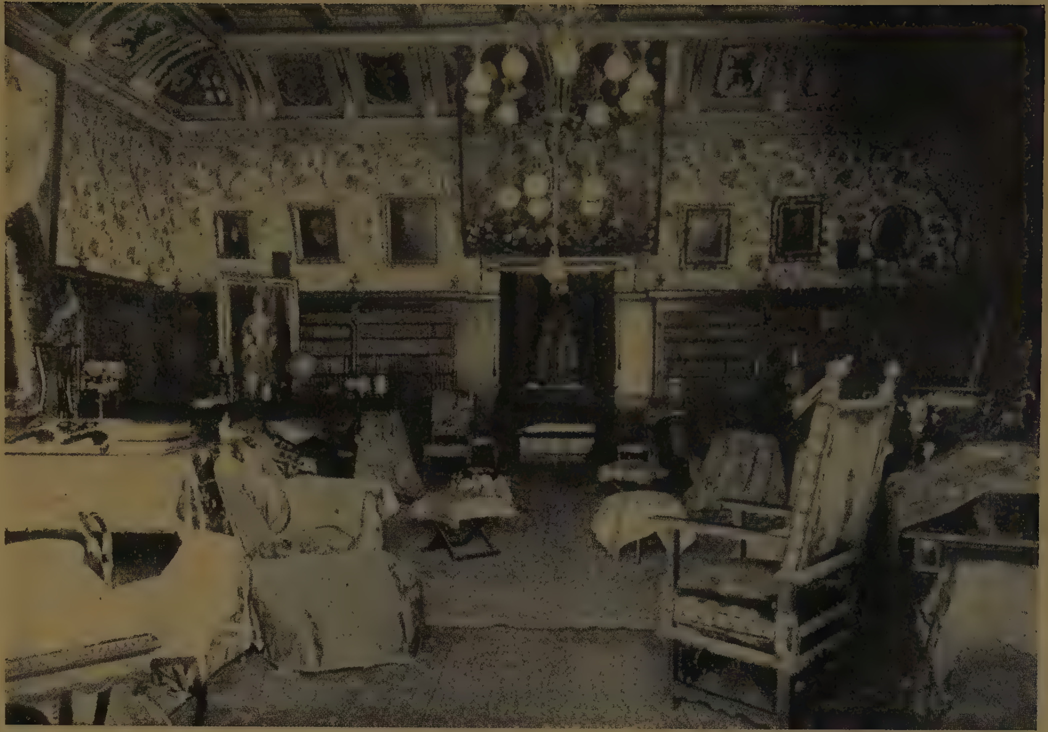
[1] Fräulein von Meysenbug had written some memoirs entitled *Lebensabend einer Idealistin.* — Tr.

Bismarck's family and cultivated it there for many years, but had also acquired a touch of Bismarck's manner; and then there was his wife, a daughter of the Baroness Grünhof, a famous singer who had been the first and most important interpreter of Verdi's Violetta (*La Traviata*), and was herself a woman of genuine artistic feeling. Nor was there any lack of great impressions. But most interesting of all was her visit to the Princess Wittgenstein, at which her father afterwards declared himself highly delighted, but which only showed anew what a gulf separated this Russian Jewess of Catholic views from the daughter of the Countess d'Agoult. Into what had not that tender nature developed, and what was the Princess's attitude towards her? As a matter of fact, the Princess would have liked beyond anything to spoil her whole stay in Rome for her, had that been possible. She tried to make trouble in one thing at least, which showed, of course, how little she knew of the heart now, having forgotten, indeed deliberately unlearnt, the way to reckon with it. She spoke almost triumphantly of the hostility of the Schleinitz *ménage* to Bayreuth; fresh from these impressions, however, Frau Cosima wrote to her friend Mimi as follows: "It gives me such real pain that you should be anxious about us, dearest friend, that I must devote one of my evenings in Rome to setting your mind at rest — in this respect, that is, that there is really nothing more to be done here. What was effected by your aid, and thanks to your interest, was the utmost that could be done. If this supreme effort failed to produce any appreciable effect, what is left for an individual to do? I am entirely in favour of waiting quietly until the person to whom the appeal has been made makes a move, and, should he not make a move, then of pulling down the theatre and finding means to cover the deficit. The bad thing about this — the only bad thing, indeed — would be handing over the works for performance in the theatre. But, in my opinion, we have all gone far beyond what present circumstances are in a position to warrant, and it is as impossible to build upon a miracle of faith and genius as to build tabernacles in the glory of the Transfiguration. The lower part of the picture, representing the man possessed by devils, demands space, while the upper portion can hardly be discerned. It is odd that this only moves me deeply because our Master is much concerned about the decisions which have to be arrived at — and painfully concerned, as you can imagine. We shall consequently have to abridge our stay in Italy very much; I am thankful that it has been possible to prolong it so far, and that for me, at least, it has been so rich in impressions that will never be effaced. It is true that we are met at every turn here by the very thing from which we are ourselves suffering, the cramping of genius and the wrong done to it, and the fabulous quality of its nature and achievements when spurred on by necessity. Yet the warmer clime seems to have been some compensation to the geniuses and has perhaps enabled them to feel less acutely what fills us — or me, at least — with sadness. Count Gobineau has just left me and will soon be fortunate enough to pay his respects to you. He asked if I had any message for you, and I thought it charming of him to have sought out my acquaintance, through the agency of Zaluski, in order to make himself agreeable to you. This said more than any words could have done for your well-known affection for me, and so I was able to laugh heartily when the Princess said to me recently: 'But they say she is estranged from you both.' Since she had been questioning me about Bayreuth, I could not but tell her what an interest you had taken in the cause, and whom we had to thank for what had been achieved, in doing which I also had to touch on personal matters. But to receive this question as an answer transformed my heated agitation into the gayest and most humorous mood — the only one with which one can possibly meet such asses' braying. But now dismiss it from your mind and surrender yourself to the force that makes men fortunate — the force of happiness, as we too are resolved to do. I do not think we shall disgrace you."

Here, indeed, was a curious contrast: on the one hand the obligatory call upon the Princess Wittgenstein, who was still filled with resentment against all who loved Liszt or were loved by Liszt, and as she smoked her Havana cigars and indulged in her fanatical scribblings, constantly gave rein to these tendencies, for which she gained countenance, so to speak, from her prayers in St. Peter's and the other churches of Rome; and, on the other hand, the quiet, original nature of the Count Gobineau, with his knowledge of the world and comprehensive views. He was a thoroughgoing adherent of the Bayreuth circle, and, in a certain sense, one of the twin luminaries who brought their intellectual ideas to a perfect consummation beneath the shadow of Wahnfried and of Frau Cosima: Gobineau and Chamberlain. Different as the Norman and the Englishman might be, there was none the less a certain affinity between them; for all that was being claimed as the inheritance of the Germanic world and was finding its way into the world through the Master's thought and artistic ideas was simultaneously working itself out in them in a thoroughly original and independent way. And so it was a momentous thing that here in Rome Frau Cosima and the Count should now have been brought into close contact for the first time. Their minds and their spiritual affinity formed a bond between them, and thus, silently but surely, grew the circle of those who were to be recognized as the elect of Bayreuth. No less beautiful and lasting in its effects was the meeting with the Countess Voss, a lady for whom Frau Cosima conceived a deep affection. It is, however, extremely difficult to do justice to all the other people who came in contact with this extraordinarily full life. For quite apart from those who joined the throng that gathered round both Wagner and his wife and might have escaped notice, there were many who made an impression on them and, thanks to Frau Cosima's goodness, remained in touch with the family for some time.

Next they went on to Florence, which made a most profound impression upon Frau Cosima. In fact, her chief characteristic was a spontaneous desire and capacity for enjoyment, springing partly from the simplicity of her nature, but partly, too, from that deep artistic consciousness which enabled her to embrace all the arts, so that she felt equally at home in the Uffizi and in the studios of the modern artists in Florence, especially that of Hildebrandt, who afterwards started a bust of her, though unfortunately he never finished it. It must have been a real pleasure for Liphardt, who acted as their guide, to initiate them into the beauties of Florence, which produced an effect that no words can express upon both her and the Master. But the idea of moving permanently to Florence, which was raised during



LIBRARY AT WAHNFRIED, 1885

Photograph by A. v. Gross

a visit to Hildebrandt's studio, met with the strongest opposition from the Master. For her own part, she would not have been at all averse from the idea, if only on account of her husband's health, and there can be no question that she would have been able to play a far greater role in the society of Florence than in little Bayreuth. But Wagner's thoroughly German sentiments decided the matter. As she writes, " Richard's sentiments are those of a German; ' besides,' he said, ' it is in Germany that, for better or for worse, I shall ultimately earn my living, and it means a very great deal to me to do so honourably. Here I should have to live as a gentleman of independent means (*Rentner*), and that would make me feel very strange.' " This closed the matter for her; but she cannot be blamed for having felt that, for other reasons too, she would rather have seen him in Italy. She made an expedition with him to Bologna, the freedom of which had previously been conferred upon him — a dignity which he had earned as an artist alone — and where he met with an enthusiastic reception from the municipal authorities as well as the people. What could have delighted this sensitive woman more than to see him honoured — and herself, too, as one of his train — and loaded with flowers on their departure, with a profusion impossible in Germany. Besides, she felt something of that old Germanic sentiment which has always drawn the Germans southwards across the Alps and still does so. How struck she must have been by the contrast between Italy and Germany, where, as a result of the wretched deficit, every sort of force would have to be set in motion, including even the Reichstag, in order, as it were, to secure the existence of the Master's wonderful ideas by grace of these Philistines! For the King of Bavaria had actually conceived the idea of placing Bayreuth on a sound footing through the Reichstag, an idea which could produce only melancholy reflections both then and now; for it was a renunciation on his part of the greatest and finest idea in his life in favour of a power which followed quite another course than that which was open to himself; but he turned aside just at the critical moment. We should never forget that one thing above all stood between the Master's great plans and the King's favour: that is, the pettiness and scruples of his officials, who were equally afraid of the representatives of the people and of an outbreak of their royal master's ill humour. But we can imagine what an effect such petty behaviour must have produced upon these artists as compared with the noble way in which they were received and treated in Florence and especially in Bologna.

On December 17, having said a melancholy farewell to the Uffizi, they started out on the homeward journey. On passing through Munich Frau Cosima paid a visit to Lenbach's studio and found the greatest pleasure in both his society and his art. " His mind and talent are becoming more and more virile and serious, and still remain free from any affectation," she writes in her diary. " His portrait of Helmholtz is the finest thing he has done; I may perhaps call it an apotheosis of simplicity (*Verklärung der Schlichtheit*)! "

And now they were back again at Bayreuth, full of cares about both their home and the theatre. A new household had to be organized, and as for the theatre, no organization existed at all for the moment — nothing but the temperamental and timorous Feustel and his faithful son-in-law Gross, who was unresting in his efforts to secure peace by a clear-sighted and firm policy. And so Frau Cosima's birthday went by, and the new year came round, shortly before which Richter suddenly appeared, driven by a spontaneous impulse to pass a day at Bayreuth. New Year's Eve was spent quietly and in solitude, and they passed the whole of their life at Triebschen in review; but the celebrations on the evening itself went off quite in the Germanic style.

The new year brought fresh cares. The Master considered that he would be forced to repeat the festival, just as Napoleon III had been forced to make war; while to the old cares were added new ones, under the impression of which Frau Cosima writes: " What I cling to is the punctilious discharge of the most trifling duties; for my melancholy is deep and would cast a gloom over everything, did not this strange force stand erect like a pillar amid the ruins. The children are flourishing, and he is in good spirits! " This was the source of her strength. It is true that when the Master spoke about the children's inheritance in this connexion, they had to admit to each other that their son would have enough to do to enter into his father's spiritual heritage, if he was really to find and create a foundation for his works. But Wagner declared that he would write *Parsifal* for him, on condition that it should not be performed till thirty years after the death of him and his wife. It is touching to read how he associated his great work with his son's youth; but the idea was a highly momentous one. It is true that the stimulus came from without and not in the gentlest way. For Dr. Strecker, the representative of the firm of Schott, presented himself at the new year like a bill and inquired after *Parsifal;* upon which Frau Cosima could only sigh: "Ah, Parsifal, when shall thy star rise?" Yet the Master's mind was already more closely engaged with this work than was supposed. A great deal was done now. Hans von Wolzogen appeared to discuss the projected *Bayreuther Blätter*, the decision to publish which caused the Master great delight and satisfaction. The result, at any rate, was the foundation of a paper which was firmly rooted in Wagner's work and creative ideas and in the future drew never-failing strength from its advocacy of the art-work of Bayreuth. The deficit, it is true, gave cause for depression, for though the hopes which they had reposed in the King's secretariate were not entirely disappointed, their realization was subject to longer and longer delays; so that Frau Cosima was glad that, as she said, the divine gift of genius kept her husband always cheerful, and no outside influences had the power to turn him aside from his ends, not even the almost disingenuous letters from Betz, which were what more particularly induced him to think more and more of simply handing over *The Ring of the Nibelung* to syndicates and theatres. It was now that the idea of financial profit to himself first dawned upon him, and in this respect the singer did him a service, though he considered himself too grand to work at Bayreuth. That generation had first to die out and make way for another. Frau Cosima's ideas were different and on a grander scale, and her comment on the discussions was: "I could cry over it, for I could have wished things had turned out otherwise. Better be content for years to come with what we already have, so long as we keep the work. Richard does not want to do this and thinks that it would not be a success, and that we should have to pay out too much. God help us! The dear children are a help to us, because they must not be allowed to notice anything, and in the end our spirits always brighten up, till they are turned to absolute rapture by contact with the 'ancients.'" For amid their anxieties about the existence of Bayreuth they were reading Thucydides, and both of them felt that there was some similarity between the fall of the Athens of Pericles and the *débâcle* of their work at Bayreuth. And now came Düfflipp, amiable and supple, as is usual with those officials who have left departmental life for that of the court; but on returning to Munich he had to admit that he had brought no positive instructions, but had merely hoped to arrive at some positive result from the King's old love for the Master's art. These were unsatisfactory affairs of the sorriest description, which naturally aroused in them a fresh longing for Italy; and the upshot of it all was that for the present nothing was to be hoped for from Munich. And now the Master's pride rose to meet the emergency, and he resolved to give some concerts in England in order to meet the deficit.

Preparations were set on foot at once. At first Wagner and his wife were naturally full of optimism and confidence in the impresarios on the spot, though Ullmann, Bülow's agent, sent urgent warnings through Liszt, and Bülow himself raised his voice so soon as he heard of the projected enterprise, and, being still sick and suffering himself, was in the gravest state of anxiety at the disappointments which might result from the projected enterprise for the Master and his wife. In this affair could be seen the full magnanimity of Bülow's nature. In the utmost agitation, he sought by every means to stop this so-called "triumphal progress" to London, for he knew that Wagner would fall into bad hands there.

Moreover, the exaggerated reports from Bayreuth had reached Liszt's ears, too, and grieved him to the depths of his soul, especially when he heard that Wagner and his wife even meant to sacrifice their home, or would be forced to do so; upon which he wrote to his daughter: "The idea that you may have to part with Wahnfried seems to me impossible. You will please tell me the real truth about these involved affairs. My poor assistance is at your disposal, and I insist upon your accepting it." This was quite his old tone again and showed his full affection, not only for his daughter, but for the Master's work. It is true that in the same letter he had to speak of his own circumstances, though in quite a different connexion: "How strikingly true is your comparison of the Princess Wittgenstein's heroic and princely personality with those beautiful mirrors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, adorned with flowers and fruit, with little geniuses and angels painted by skilful artists, whose talent none the less makes it impossible to use the mirrors themselves if one wants a true reflection of things. On the other hand, I have letters and notes of hers which are far more dictatorial than those of which you tell me. You know that for years past, to my extreme grief, I have reached the point of confining my relations with her to the most essential points of our existence, no less so than with Daniel Stern, though in a different fashion. She, too, is borne along on a stream of illusions, though of a far nobler and more powerful nature, and for my part I find I am too high and dry (*auf dem Trockenen*) to follow her." This was plain-spoken enough, and in such conditions he, too, could be of no assistance. During this period of general misery in Germany Wagner had therefore to act for himself, in order by his own energy to arouse that of the King.

For all this, the life which he and his wife led was a thoroughly intellectual one, by which each managed to help the other through the vicissitudes of their material situation, which are well known. Every day brought new impressions and satisfactions; but the most momentous of these was when, on January 25, after a conversation on the sufferings of genius, he said in his gay way: "There is something that I will not tell you." "Oh, tell me!" she cried. "I am starting on *Parsifal*, and I shall not lay it aside till it is finished." And so it happened. By the 28th he was already able to tell her that he had got past the most difficult point in his *Parsifal*, which was not concerned with the *question*, but with the recovery of the *lance*, upon which everything depended. The difficulty was, he said, that they had now to deal with a world which was so far removed from myth. Thus she was full of joy and he of creative power, and quoted Goethe's words: "*Ihr naht euch wieder, schwankende Gestalten* (Again ye come, ye hovering forms)." It was twelve years since he had composed a libretto, that of *The Mastersingers*, which he had completed in Paris. "At that time," he said, "he had had nothing to animate him save his creative impulse. Now his creative impulse was animated by me and the children. He told me how in *The Mastersingers* he had found a fruitful motive for further development in the dream, and that he was now seeking a similar one in his libretto."

Things now advanced rapidly, though under the most depressing external conditions; for an old friend of the family died just now, Oberkonsistorialrat Dittmar, whose death Frau Cosima took greatly to heart. She makes the following entry about her visit to the house of mourning: "I saw him lying there, peaceful and simple. With him the soul of our little town has passed away, so far as I am concerned." For as yet she had no idea that she had already found another true and devoted soul who was putting forth all his powers on behalf of her and her house — Adolf Gross, whose father-in-law had made use of his connexions as a Freemason with the object of setting her mind at rest about Hans von Bülow's condition and now received reassuring news as a result of inquiries addressed to the lodge at Hanover. This relief to her mind was particularly necessary at this time, for she had to bear the brunt of all their anxieties, both material and moral. On the one hand there was the Master engaged in creative work, who had to have his peace and creative power safeguarded, and on the other hand there were the petty vexations of their material affairs, arising out of the deficit; there was also the mean attitude of the King's Household towards this question, besides all the proposals which now came in and had to be dealt with — and Wagner must not be allowed to see any of this. How excited and happy she was when, as early as February 5, he told her that he had finished the prose dialogue for the first act. What did it matter how much Feustel kept urging that the Master really must go off to England, while Wagner himself was now calmly reconciled to the idea? This did not prevent her from taking part merrily in her daughter Eva's birthday party, at which *The Rhinegold* was performed on the puppet-theatre, as well as in the fun with which the children at Wahnfried celebrated the opening of carnival; though in spite of this she was in a gloomy mood and sought consolation in Indian literature and Indian proverbs. How it affected this great woman's soul when she read: " Fate I hold sure, but the work of man is of no avail." Or: " The stones are gods. They do not hope, they do not beg, they do not worry about other people's affairs, and only move when one insists upon it." Indeed, these were no easy days. Gloomy news still came in nearly every day, as well as good news, though she was unable to enjoy the latter as she should have done, and writes on one occasion: " It is really singular that all happy tidings from the outer world now fill me with profoundest melancholy." And she continues: " I wanted to pray for Hans with Fidi, but I was afraid of the effect on the child, who is looking at me now with a deep and thoughtful glance and throwing his arms round me tenderly, as though he knew all, and knew, what is more, that one must not say anything: guilt is the most terrible of evils. I accuse nothing and nobody, and I am conscious of the fearful, inexpiable guilt of my birth (*Schuld des Geborenseins*). Oh, could I but hear before I die that all is well with Hans, that he is leading a peaceful and healthy life! Oh, how I should exult and rejoice! " And she closes her reflections with the words: " When my dear Siegfried learns what I have suffered, he must not shudder. But he must know that through all my anguish I have blessed him and his father, it is only myself that I have hated and cursed — no, not even that, but I have suffered beyond expression." It is wonderful how through all her endless self-torturings she still had the strength to play a strong and spirited part in everything. She was her husband's understanding confidante, and he went so far as to say to her that he had none but her in the world with whom he could find understanding. She was the stable point in the midst of his creative work, which was now advancing rapidly, while side by side with it flourished that musical and intellectual life which always went on at Wahnfried even in the days of most grievous anxiety. Before February was at an end, the prose libretto was completed. " Yesterday evening Richard was writing busily, in order, he said, to give me a surprise early this morning. And on coming to table he actually gave me the completed prose dialogue of *Parsifal.* We drank to the health of it at dinner, and this afternoon I am reading it to myself. Here is blessing, here is consolation, here is devotion and piety. 'The Saviour released from bonds (*Der entfesselte Erlöser*).' "[1]

As she looked on at the Master's life, indeed, her chief preoccupation was to foster his creative impulse. She watched over him and influenced him without pressure or admonition, and when the great and mystic moment arrived, it was she who, so to speak, extended her protecting wings over him. But it really took some external stimulus to make him create — an emergency, as it were, in which, like his Wälsung, he found the sword. This much, indeed, he had gained from his association with the theatre: it was mere child's play to him to make arrangements about singers and orchestra and with concert-agents, though it caused him some agitation. Side by side with all this, Frau Cosima was leading a strange life of her own. March 5 was approaching — the anniversary of her mother's death — and with her mind full of these memories she wrote to her mother's friend Tribert, at the same time reading her mother's last work, the *History of Holland,* which also fascinated the Master, though he declared that he could, so to speak, read the woman through the book. Next came their visit to Meiningen, about which her father afterwards wrote in high delight: " What a pleasure it is to hear how you and Wagner are spoken of in this palace! Yesterday the Duke and his wife both told me repeatedly that Wagner's amiability and your prestige had fascinated and made a sensation in the whole town such as had never happened before. For my own part, I am equally charmed with the amiability of Frau von Heldburg, to whom I have always paid a tribute of unalloyed esteem."

But we can best see what fateful events were taking place during these days preceding their visit to London, as well as all Frau Cosima's inner life, from a letter to Malwida, which she wrote from Altenburg out of the fullness of her heart and which reveals a profusion of changing moods: "From whence am I writing to you, my only Malwida, and with what feelings! I had to bring my Loldchen here, to an orthopædic institution, where I shall have to leave her for goodness knows how long. I was anxious about her condition, so sent for Frau Dr. Hertz, who diagnosed a misplacement, which, if neglected, might prove serious. So here we are, the dear child quiet, pale, and weeping silently, I without a tear, numb, and haunted by sombre ideas, while the most superstitious imaginings lurk within me; neither resigned nor rebellious, but sad in an almost lifeless way, as though I now knew sadness for the first time and had no life either behind me or before. Certainly, neither I personally nor our home life could receive a heavier blow than the departure of this child! May God keep all harmful thoughts afar from me! But I had such a struggle at home to keep up the pretence that it is quite natural, and indeed a good thing, that I am exhausted now and think of nothing but that in two days' time I am going to leave my child here. I know quite well that it is really necessary, that other mothers have worse things to go through, I know all this, I have thought about it, but I cannot get the better of my feelings. I had to tell you this; perhaps I shall succeed in recovering my spirits tomorrow. But for today I can only say good-night! I think of your room in London. It is certainly better here, but it makes me shiver; customs, atmosphere, language, it is all so utterly strange to the child! And to me too. Besides, it is very cold. Oh, and these German domestic ways! Loldi is asleep now. We arrived before three o'clock, tomorrow I shall have more to say to you, I think — and I hope — in a different strain."

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[1] *Parsifal,* Scene III, end.—Tr.

And she was right. On April 17 she writes again: "I ought to be ashamed to send you the letter which I wrote yesterday and which, on reading it, I feel to be written in the style of a schoolgirl: but here it is. For on top of everything else I was physically very exhausted, too. Today I am already feeling better. Loldi has done her exercises, I have taken her round to one or two families, and she is now playing with the boarders. I have to fight against German ways, which, like the German climate, arouse an almost insurmountable antipathy in those who have not been accustomed to them from infancy; but that cannot be helped. The food, the medical treatment, and the school are good, and Frau Hertz is certainly admirable at her profession. You see, dearest, that I am far removed, indeed, from æsthetic considerations, but I will try to answer in some detail with regard to the subject you mention. I have read *Der Milde Welf* (*The Gentle Welf*), and though the choice of the subject, and the chief scene, between Rotbart [Barbarossa] and Welf, certainly bear witness to the talents which have always been recognized as belonging to Karl Ritter, I am none the less most shocked at the clumsy way in which the exposition is handled. One learns nothing from the restrained and silent Zollern, so that one simply cannot understand the rage of the son. It seems to me that Welf ought first to have inquired about his trusty follower, asking how matters stand and whether he is still silent. Next I find a lack of local and historical colour, and a commonplaceness in the language which is very surprising, considering that the whole of the introduction deals with questions of form. When such critical situations are devised, for instance, as that between Adelheid and Berthold Zollern — which are not uninteresting in themselves and remind us very much of the Zollerns — the language ought to be in keeping with the sense, and he ought not to talk jocosely of 'giving the sack (*von Korb geben*),' and 'getting the sack (*Körbe nehmen*)' or of 'rattling clock-work (*klapperndem Uhrwerk*).' He has certainly not found the right language for his situations, which are at times very well thought out, and he ought not to have let slip such a howler (*Schnitzer*), as 'Gibelline' — or he should have said 'Quelfe' too; besides, so far as I know, the Waiblinger may have been in existence at this period, but not yet the Ghibellines. As for the introduction, it is interesting that he is concerned with this most important problem of verse. But what I complain of in him is that he has not once referred to Wagner's writings, in which this subject has been treated exhaustively and for the very first time. What he said about *Faust* is copied almost word for word from Wagner." It was almost designedly that she sent her friend these criticisms on Richard Wagner's disciple and friend Karl Ritter, as a transition to the subject of that other who threatened, in some sense, to become Malwida's destiny. "Nietzsche's delight once more shows us how weak his judgment is in this case. I think that there is in Nietzsche a darkly creative substratum of which he is himself hardly conscious; it is from this that the important element in him springs, but then he takes alarm at it; whereas all that he says and thinks, however luminous (*lichterhellt*) it may be, is really not worth much. In him it is the tellurian element that is of importance, while the solar element is insignificant and even worrying and uninvigorating to him, owing to the conflict with the tellurian. His opinion of Shakspere reminded me of a friend — aged only sixteen, it is true — who said that people could not seriously admire Homer; or of Raff, who said of Beethoven's C minor Symphony: 'Between ourselves, I should not care to have written it'; or of a French attaché who burst into a fit of laughter when I spoke of the great poets of the thirteenth century. But I can quite understand your impatience about the Spaniards and the airy way in which they are dismissed by such a raw young critic. I recently asked your cousin to read a piece by Lope de Vega *The Charcoal-Seller* (*La Carbonera*) and was once more amazed at this natural romanticism, this dramatic quality, this homely humour, so much akin to Shakspere, and the rush of passion that suddenly gushes forth at times and never degenerates into rhetoric. In reading Calderón I have often had the feeling that the apparent narrowness of the dogmas only served to enable us to perceive other things, just as those who look at the sky by daylight from the bottom of a pit would already be able to see the stars, when those who open their eyes with the sun in the morning can see nothing. When in *Life is a Dream* (*Vida es Sueño*) he suddenly cries: 'The greatest crime is that of being born,' or when in *The Adoration of the Cross* (*La Devoción de la Cruz*) he shows us that works are of little avail in the presence of the cross, or when in *The Physician of his own Honour* (*El Médico de su Honra*) he causes the most savage revenge to be taken for the mildest fault, we are anxious to understand him, and if we cannot always follow him in his assumptions, we can still admire his amazing power as a dramatist, and the incomparable tenderness of his lyrical poetry in the sonnets scattered here and there. I admit that his views on the subject-matter of the dogmas are sometimes expressed in a repellent way, almost jesuitical in its sophistry. But this side of him is a matter for the theologians, he remains none the less a poet, and this is why Goethe and Schiller followed him. Have you read *The Mayor of Zalamea* (*El Alcalde de Zalamea*) and *The Monster of the Gardens* (*El Monstruo de los Jardines*)? Do read them. Lope is more popular — the 'Miracle of Nature,' as he was magnanimously called by the great Cervantes, whom he supplanted. Those who will not let themselves be borne on such mighty pinions whithersoever these may carry them confess their own great mental incapacity. But let the Spaniards rest uneasily in the paper-basket of such a brain as Nietzsche, by the side of Shakspere, speculation, and what not. 'Great thoughts come from the heart,' says Vauvenargues, a dictum which may be applied to Nietzsche, for his great thoughts come to him, not from his brain, but from what? Ah, who can say?

"Only think, my father has spent ten days with us, quiet, peaceful days, during which he played us many of his own compositions, to our great joy.

"How is your life shaping itself now? I am very anxious to know. But I am very glad that you are not consenting to Nietzsche's new proposals and again doing everything for everybody. I think that if you could make up your mind simply to tell him how matters stand, you would perhaps be doing him an even greater service than Dr. S., should he cure him. But it is difficult, if not impossible, if one is not the man's mother or sister. Elisabeth Nietzsche answered me very evasively.

"Next week we start for London. On Sunday I am expecting a visit from Frau von Schleinitz, who is going to Italy and will probably pay you a visit there too. I am leaving the children at home with Miss Cooper, commending them all to the keeping of the good spirits (*gute Geister*). Our stay in Meiningen was very nice, the Duke himself most interesting and more friendly than words can say, his wife very natural and therefore pleasing, besides which the performances were stimulating too: Grillparzer's *Esther*, inordinately sentimental, lacking in all naïveté, but a good sort of sentimentality, like a nice invalid. One can still feel the Schiller tradition in the form. *Le Malade imaginaire* was almost better performed than in Paris and highly diverting. *Julius Cæsar* — begging Nietzsche's pardon — produced an indescribable effect upon me, though the principal characters, Brutus and Cæsar, were thoroughly bad; but Antony was splendid, and all the ensembles incomparable. I could have talked all night about the poetry, and when we got home, we read through all the scenes, asking ourselves how Cæsar's part ought to have been declaimed and afterwards turning to Plutarch. It is bold to express any choice, but I think that of all Shakspere's plays *Julius Cæsar* is the one which gives me the greatest sense of tragedy. But what would Nietzsche say to this?

"And now, in conclusion, may I say that you will receive a visit from my friend the Countess Voss, and express my hope that you will find her sympathetic. I am very fond of her. She bears a very hard fate with admirable resignation. Her only son, who possessed great talent, was killed, I think at Königgrätz. As a young woman she was peerlessly lovely and inspired the poet Graf Strachwitz with love for her, while her sentiments for him were pure and full of renunciation. I think that beauty was her guardian angel, since she has come through all her experiences so triumphantly amiable. She is now bearing with heroic simplicity a serious eye-trouble, which threatens her with blindness. You will understand how her piety attracts me, for she is absolutely tolerant. Finally — and I know that this will count very much with you, for I know you so well — she is really fond of me. I send on this outline of her life in advance, for I am so anxious that you should like her. I need not tell you that this is quite between ourselves.

"We are already having a great deal of annoyance and trouble over London. I am not at all sure that the business side is in good hands. And our *Ring of the Niblung*, too, gives us a great deal to do. But the Wagner societies still manage to drag on their existence, and we shall see what will happen there. Bismarck dismissed, war at our doors, the deplorable state of our trade and industry — all these conditions hardly offer a very auspicious prospect for the promotion of an artistic idea, but when did auspicious conditions ever exist in Germany? — I have not yet told you that Daniela is with me again and promises very well. I am now initiating her into housekeeping, in order to make up for all that was neglected in her education at boarding-school. Little Ida is a splendid help to me in this, for her thoughtful, quiet, yet at the same time very wide-awake character has a very good effect upon Daniela. Besides her we have the daughters of a few other residents in Bayreuth — the General's and the President's girls — whom I like very much. Fritz Brockhaus wrote me a very nice letter on the occasion of his father's death. It is a sad thing that such trials have to come before people learn reason, but such is life, and I am glad, all the same, to have taken up our connexion with him again. I must not close without telling you that Loldi is quite content with her lot, she is playing with the children now and says it is very nice here. I think it will turn out well. It is at home that we shall find it hard. What a lot of things I could still find to say, but one must make an end somewhere! However, here is a fifth page to tell you our London address. I am very depressed today and feel ill, I think one's inward grief gradually comes to announce itself by a physical malaise only. I can no longer weep or struggle, nor do I feel any indignation, only palpitations, breathlessness, headache, and so forth. If anything occurs to make one very happy, then there is an end of it. When I received Friedrich Brockhaus's letter and felt cordially disposed towards him again, when I saw Ellen S. again, whose conduct towards me before had been rather mysterious, and when I recently read in a letter the words: 'What ought to have estranged us from each other has drawn us nearer,' and Tristan's answer came into my head: '*Ich weiss es anders* (I know that cannot be),'[1] it makes me wonder what our feelings amount to before they have been put to the test, whether an experience can ever be effaced, or whether in one's apathy one simply entertains illusions. And I felt that what happens is this: our feelings undergo a painful metamorphosis, that they may be transformed into love within us; joy, confidence, and serenity have fled, and affection has really gone too, and in place of these bitterness, distrust, depression, and antipathy make their entry. But if those who hurt us are worthy of esteem, a strange transmutation begins within us, and while it is in process, we tread the solitary road from paradise to the cross. If we really succeed in getting to the end of it, we may indeed say that we love these people, though, of course, we are brought no closer to them; for it is a lonely road, that of '*selige Öde auf sonniger Höh'* (Happy wastes on sunny heights),'[1] and ah! who would not recall the paradise of innocence, who would not abandon struggle for joy, insight into life for confidence? I feel, my only Malwida, as though you had trod this path in connexion with all those with whom you have had to do, and I have thought it all over, even more in relation to myself than to you. Yet I am proud to think that in no vicissitude of life would you have had to go through this on my account, for with you I feel sheltered as though beneath great wings upon which one can soar aloft, yet which are also able to cover and hide one."

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[1] *Tristan and Isolde*, F. Jameson's translation (Schott), Act III, Scene i.

This letter is an important piece of evidence of the relation between these two remarkable women, one of whom had it as her great task to shield and make happy one of the greatest of men, while the other, though loving humanity in the first place, for love of humanity devoted herself to the service of individuals, giving love, but never meeting with such love as she deserved. Throughout the whole of Frau Cosima's life it is a characteristic phenomenon that the sickness of anyone in the narrower circle of those dear to her filled her with the greatest agitation and for the moment distracted her, but she always managed to regain her self-control and to give a connected account of her thoughts and impressions alike, as is also shown by her letter to Malwida.

She now returned home, and on the evening of April 20 the Master read her the third act of *Parsifal*, upon which her only comment is: " He gave me the libretto, which was like a supreme consolation to me in the tribulation of existence." But her whole mind was intent on delivering him as soon as possible from all material responsibilities, in order to give him the absolute quiet necessary to complete the music for this work. They could have disposed of sufficient resources to supply his personal needs and those of the house, for the offers which reached them were so numerous that they had to be considered carefully, and some of them declined, in spite of the financial profits which they offered. But a vigorous blow had got to be struck on behalf of Bayreuth in order to meet the crushing deficit, and they hoped that a visit to London would relieve them of all their obligations. The business and artistic sides of this visit are well known, and I shall therefore pass them over; besides which, it is far more interesting to follow Frau Cosima on the journey, which was by way of Brussels and Ostend, for these things were never out of her thoughts for a moment. The Master, as usual, suffered from sea-sickness during the crossing, but Frau Cosima was not affected by it at all. She wrote in her diary that she was almost ashamed at feeling none of his misery and even finding a sort of pleasure in this novel journey. The first thing they did in London was to take a drive through the city, which produced an extraordinarily strong impression upon her: " The mist here gives everything a rather ghostly character, and it was actually in this busiest of worlds that the ideal side of things and the dreamlike quality of life came home to me very clearly. Even the most massive buildings cannot be taken in at a glance; they are there, and yet they elude one. But the low houses and large gardens give an impression of freedom and comfort. If I had to choose one great city rather than another, it would be London." She visited the National Gallery with her husband, admired the Reynoldses, and arrived at a juster estimate of Hogarth; she succeeded, indeed, in general, in adapting herself to the artistic world of London, drawing a characteristic contrast between Italy and this foggy northern city. She made the acquaintance of the famous writer George Eliot, of whom she carried away a noble and pleasing impression. She felt quite at home at the great party given by Lady L. in their honour, at which four hundred guests were present in a most brilliant setting. They were, in fact, treated like royal visitors. On top of this came a tempting offer from America, the idea of which was entertained by the Master, though her only comment is:

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[1] *Siegfried*, III, iii.

" Then there would be no returning to Germany! " This was a momentous piece of news, which did most towards persuading the King to assume responsibility for the deficit; for he was simply beside himself when he heard of these American proposals, which were still rare at that time and so seemed all the more tempting. He felt bound to do all in his power to keep the Master at home; this was poor enough by comparison with the American offers, but what was not poor in Germany at that time, and even later, where art and artists are concerned?

But Frau Cosima was interested in everything. She visited the British Museum, with all its untold treasures, and on her way home caught sight of her husband in a carriage in " Nogent Street." She immediately drove after him, and after a long time caught him up, saluting him most merrily. She visited the Established Church in order to hear a famous preacher named Roussell (*sic*). The impression produced upon her by the extraordinarily sober service was an extremely chilling one, and she said she could quite understand the active Catholic propaganda in London. She also visited Parliament with Miss Cartwright, and was able to compare it with the French parliament, at the same time taking into consideration the experience which Germany had already had of this institution. It did not move her from either the human, the political, or the artistic side; but she was all the more impressed by the wealth of the British Museum, so soon as she had recovered from the repellent contrast between its outside and its inside, and especially by the Van Dycks and the glorious and magical Rembrandts, though she remarked that they were out of place in those surroundings, and while she was looking at the pictures, she longed to be back again in the palaces of Italy. She visited Westminster Abbey several times, during one of which, at the close of the sermon, she heard Elisabeth's Prayer played on the organ. " The crowd dispersed in absolute silence, while above their heads the soul spread its wings in song: the former returning dully and mutely to this life, the latter dedicating itself pensively to death." On the third occasion she heard a famous preacher, as well as Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise*, which seemed as much out of place to her there as did the many monuments. She made the acquaintance of a number of famous men, among others the German archæologist Schliemann, who did not, indeed, strike her as very impressive, whereas Siemens made a very remarkable impression upon her. She visited a number of studios, among others that of the painter Watts, who showed her a portrait of Joachim, about which she remarks: "The whole biography of this excessively unpleasant person lies before me in this portrait. The painter had no intention of this, and his talent as an artist is revealed precisely by the fact that he represented the truth without being aware of it — indeed, while meaning to express something glorious." The sight of Joachim's portrait, awakening as it did all her unpleasant memories of this enemy of her father, of her first and of her second husband alike, caused him to stand out in all his villainy and was a sort of anticipation in a negative sense of the celebrations of May 22, which were marked by a great banquet in London. She of course had to sit between the two painters Herkomer and Burne-Jones. In short, this was a time of most stimulating experiences, and she was really sad when their visit drew to a close; for London's historic past produced a powerful impression upon her. With what feelings did she go over the Tower, thinking more particularly of Scott! And with thoughts of Shakspere she entered into pleasant relations with the representatives of recent English literaure — for instance, the poet [William] Morris.

Thus she was really sad and left London almost in low spirits, for melancholy always overtook her on any abrupt change of conditions. From London they went on to Ems, where they found the children, and especially Fidi, who, like the Master, was to take a cure there. They were able to celebrate his birthday with great rejoicing, for on the very same day she at last received the final statement of accounts bearing on their visit to London. They had dreaded everything, even a deficit; but not only had the high expenses, totalling two hundred thousand marks, been covered, but there also remained a surplus of seven hundred pounds for Bayreuth; upon which she remarked that she felt in better spirits, for she had made up her mind to face the worst. But since the seven hundred pounds were far from sufficient to cover the deficit, she now offered her husband the forty thousand francs of her fortune which she could touch, in order to relieve him of anxiety at least for the moment; for, as she writes: " I truly believe that the children will not impute this to me for evil, and I know that God will bless it unto them."

She now started copying out the libretto of *Parsifal*, which was indeed the greatest comfort to her. There was no lack of amusements and gaiety. They took the boat up the Rhine with the children as far as Bingen, where she had stayed fourteen years before under such very different conditions. They went to the French theatre, which, oddly enough, was playing before the Emperor William I, and heard *Le Tigre de Bengale*, a French piece which was a revelation to them of the utterly deplorable state of the French stage at that time, though the acting of the piece made it diverting. She also received a letter from her father about the state of the negotiations with Bronsart von Schellendorf, Intendant of the opera at Hanover. Liszt was entirely on his pupil's side and reported these really petty affairs all to the advantage of his " second Hans," of whom he was fond. But in doing so he was also inspired by another and a justifiable feeling; for negotiations had been going on for a long time between the Intendant and his old friend Hans von Bülow, with a view to the latter's taking over the position of chief conductor at Hanover, an idea which was naturally highly gratifying to Liszt. Further, it should not be forgotten that during Bülow's illness Bronsart had looked after him most faithfully and hospitably.

There were plenty of interesting people at Ems, among them Count Pourtalès, with whom she had a most interesting conversation about the state of Germany and the National Liberal party, which was now beginning to give Bismarck trouble; and they agreed that it was very difficult to make any headway with the Germans. Nothing was decided yet about America, and she really did not know whether to advise Wagner in favour of it or against it, for, as she writes: " When Richard talks about America, I have not the heart to oppose him." She was now annoyed to hear that the *Neue Freie Presse* had bought for publication Wagner's letters to a milliner (*Putzmacherin*) — her annoyance being due, not to these paltry letters themselves, but to the vulgar minds revealed by this action. As we know, these letters appeared separately, and, what is more, were disposed of piecemeal by persons who gave themselves out to be representatives and admirers of the Master, in a base way which was calculated to produce a distorted impression of the facts.

Besides Pourtalès, she also met a deputy named Windthorst. It was with no diplomatic intentions that she approached the doughty protagonist of the Ultramontane party. The " Pearl of Meppen " was indeed an interesting personality in himself, about whom still hovered memories of the former Kingdom of Hanover — more so then, indeed, than today — and he was undoubtedly a most intelligent and weighty politician, whose spell even Bismarck could not throw off so long as he remained in power. Her comment on him was that, though far from handsome to look at, he was none the less decidedly gifted; and when Wagner gave him his *Kunst und Politik* (*Art and Politics*), he talked over political conditions in great detail. It was a delightful evening when Windthorst brought back the book and made some penetrating and significant observations on it, as well as on other questions — though naturally as a mere politician; for such he was, and, as Frau Cosima rightly inferred, he had no other feelings of any sort. His ultramontanism, too, was purely political. For the rest, she judged his outlook upon affairs to be a perfectly impartial one; but, she said, the Centre party was so strong that in the end it was sure to bear him in a direction of which he disapproved. At an evening party at which Count Pourtalès was also present, they met Frau Wesendonck, too, who was staying in the neighbourhood with her daughter Myrrha. The conversation turned entirely upon political and sociological questions, and the gist of it was: " What are we Germans? All we know is that we shall be stripped by the Jews and dressed by the French (*von den Juden aus-, von den Franzosen angezogen*) " — for so Count Pourtalès summed up the matter on that occasion with the wit of a diplomatist. On the next morning Frau Cosima sent her son to the Kurhaus with a bouquet of corn-flowers to present to the Emperor and enters in her diary:

"Fidi saw and spoke to the venerable Emperor, who greeted him kindly, probably for the first and last time."

Next they went on to Heidelberg, where, however, her son fell ill and caused her great anxiety. Meanwhile she had finished copying out *Parsifal,* and lamented the fact that it was over; for this work had completely banished the real world from her sight. The child's condition improved very rapidly, and they could once more enjoy the place to their heart's content and revel in Schwetzingen, too, where they saw a falling star and a falcon circling over their heads. This was a good omen, and the Master said in his amiable way: "The falcon thinks that Wagner cannot but be lucky, for he has at his side the only being for whose sake life is worth living." In fact, they felt wonderfully happy here, and she remarked that nowhere else had they been so much at home and all to themselves. It was like an idyllic episode in the travels of a newly-married couple; and when one morning they saw a pair of doves on the terrace of the hotel where they had been sitting in the evening, he remarked: "Those are our souls, which have stayed here conversing since yesterday evening." He delighted in her presence and her wit and became quite angry at the very thought that they had not found each other fifteen years before: "How much dreary nonsense would have been spared me!"

They next went on to Lucerne, and especially to Triebschen, which they visited with their hearts full of old and touching memories; then on to Munich, Nuremberg, and Weimar — for Liszt had written several letters urging them to come to see him there — and finally back to Bayreuth. From here Frau Cosima wrote on August 5 to her friend Malwida, to whom she had sent an interesting account of London from Ems. The object of her letter was to persuade her friend to accept an invitation to Bayreuth, in which, to her great disappointment, she did not succeed. After setting her house in some sort of order and, as she expressed it, giving battle to the dragon, she wrote: "We have been in Lucerne, and visited Triebschen, sadly yet merrily, a strange mixture brought about by vanished happiness and present bliss. Then Munich too for a day, then Nuremberg, then a visit of a week to my father at Weimar, then Altenburg and my

Loldchen, who looks quite like Schiller's *Mädchen aus der Fremde* (Maid from Foreign Lands). My father was well, though a little tired. Frau von Schleinitz came to meet us there, as gay and charming as ever. Nietzsche is in Paris, he seems full of philosophic resignation and talked of nothing but his horrible father." And a few days later she continues: "After a number of visitors we are now all by ourselves. First my father spent three days with us here on his way to Rome, then our friend Dannreuther for a week; he still continues to show himself a most good and efficient friend to us; besides all sorts of passing travellers, for the situation of Bayreuth is now more convenient, and almost every day now brings us surprise visitors and a great number of people anxious to see the theatre. This is a good thing, for it pays for the upkeep of the building. I am badly in need of a rest and must again beg you to be patient with such a letter. Resuming housekeeping and teaching the children throw a great strain upon me, and the utter lack of quiet which this means for me makes life a heavy burden — though I bear it willingly, and you know that I am not complaining. But I cannot help noticing that my easy, willing spirit is deserting me, and that all which used to be a delight to me is now a labour. For instance, I have just broken off a letter to my father because I felt incapable of writing it as I should have wished. Ah, how well I understand why people become quite silent, throw up everything, and submit to some authority! For it is a frightening thing to will anything when one knows." Next she goes on to speak of Nietzsche, expressing her sincere pleasure at the fact that, after all, he had given up all other plans, including that of marriage, and meant to return to Basel. It is touching and affecting to notice that now, when Nietzsche had become completely estranged from Bayreuth, she was none the less able to speak of him calmly and impartially. — Her wish that Malwida should come to Bayreuth was frustrated, for Fräulein von Meysenbug had returned to Rome without passing through Bayreuth — indeed, she was unable to visit Wahnfried, which hurt and depressed Frau Cosima exceedingly. But she says a great deal to her about the plan for the school, as well as about their acquaintances, and especially about the *Memoiren einer Ideal-*

istin, which had just appeared at that time — a book which, in spite of the many other paths followed by Frau Malwida, none the less belongs to Wahnfried; for it was thither and to the Master's art that all the wanderings of this wonderful and unique woman led — a woman who may almost be described as a nun belonging to an atheistical, yet none the less serious, nunnery. Frau Cosima draws the following comparison between these *Memoirs* and those of her mother: " I am happy to hear that you liked my mother's *Memoirs* so much — yours are more valuable and important; besides, you were able to say everything, whereas my mother appears to have followed an artistic scheme, and really succeeded in producing a finely composed book, extraordinarily well written, in which one can perceive how lacerated her feelings were, and cannot help admiring her for veiling her anguish in this way and imposing an ordered form upon it. Yet the book makes me sad. But what does not make us sad in this world? More and more it has come to be the contemplative natures which exert a magical attraction for me, and I believe that if my life had not assigned me such a definite sort of occupation, I should yield myself entirely to mysticism."

She seemed to become more and more lonely, for she writes: " There are so few, so very few, whom I want to have with me, you are really the only one, and now you are going away like this, and I keep imagining that if I had bothered you with telegrams and proposals, you would have come." But Malwida had gone to Rome, where she found herself drawn into a curious association with the Princess Wittgenstein, of which she has herself given a description. Frau Cosima, however, writes on this subject: " You ought to give the Princess *Parsifal* to read. I should be very glad to hear what she thinks of it. I quite understand that you should find pleasure in her society, for she is absolutely different from everybody else in all ways, and though one cannot altogether trust her, yet one can trust oneself to her — which sounds paradoxical; but you will understand me. I knew that she was on very bad terms with my father; she has the insane idea of trying to introduce a liberal tendency into the Church; she is a friend of Antonelli, and therefore an enemy of the Jesuits, and she lives and moves in a web of the most fine-drawn distinctions, whereas everything in the Church is so crudely and brutally outspoken. Her bearing has something quite original, but also something crazy about it. For instance, she repudiates the writings which she puts into circulation. The combination of her practical views with the chimeras in which she is absorbed produces a singular effect. She dreams of a liberal Church, but admits cunning and superficiality to her program side by side with martyrdom for the truth — a regular old-clothes-shop of the greatest interest."

This is quite one of the most interesting pictures we have of the Princess and her doings in Rome, as well as of her relations with Liszt. As a matter of fact, quite apart from all other motives, whether based on feeling or outward circumstances, the chief thing that now came between her and Liszt was the fundamental divergence between their types of religious sentiment. He had succeeded in preserving the emotions of his childhood, and we really catch an echo, as it were, of the days when he was a boy when, in a letter to his daughter, he describes his return to Rome as follows: " This morning at six o'clock I once more heard the bells of Rome pealing. You know that there are many of them, but quite mediocre in tone, even those of St. Peter's; but the way in which they ring has a certain tone of familiarity, in keeping with the devout character of the country, where supernatural things seem so natural. It is a curious thing that in the metropolis of Catholicism, with all its three hundred churches, bells and organs are neglected. There is nothing grand or solemn; a commonplace ding-dong, repeated over and over again, suffices for all purposes." It was this feeling that also enabled him to enter into *Parsifal* with his whole soul and listen reverently to the bells in the Temple of the Grail; for he was already familiar with it and knew, too, that immediately upon returning to Wahnfried Frau Cosima had started upon the French translation of the work. A few weeks previously, indeed, she had discussed this with the composer himself and expressly states that she had then finished it. The sight of the manuscript, which lies before me, arouses a wonderful emotion — nay, more, it enables one to enter into the sentiment of the work. It is perhaps this wonderful woman's most characteristic achievement, for she has succeeded in rendering the profound character of the libretto of *Parsifal* in French — by dint, it is true, of a severe struggle with the problem of expression, and she often remarks that it is impossible to say the simplest things in French. But, in spite of her serious eye-trouble, she completed the translation with comparative rapidity; and her father, too, took a great interest in it, especially when, shortly before Christmas, the libretto arrived in print — for Wagner had had to make up his mind to the sacrifice of handing over the libretto for immediate publication, because his debt to Schott held him fast in the publisher's hands. As we shall see, he had to make yet other heavy sacrifices just at this time; but the publication of the libretto in itself exerted a deep and great influence, at this time when Frau Cosima was already permitted to absorb herself in the first part of the music, in an ecstasy of religious emotion. On receipt of the libretto Franz Liszt wrote as follows: " Greatly delighted with *Parsifal.* Here is a work that brings consolation and makes one happy to be alive in this world. I hope to see it performed yet and shall then pronounce my *Nunc dimittis.* When you have finished the French translation of this wonderful poem, my beloved daughter, show it me, and should it prove necessary — which I doubt — I will venture to serve as your assistant. Before returning to Weimar I will pay you a visit at Wahnfried, the metropolis of the Ideal. On December 25 you will have attained the age of forty. As my dear mother, to whom I have always been a good son, used to say to me, so I say to you, dearest Cosima, that you are a wonderful daughter. My prayer to God is that we may remain united for ever." And he enclosed in his letter a composition, the *Prière aux anges gardiens* (*Hymn to the Guardian Angels*) as a present to his granddaughter Daniela. He also added very charmingly: " While Delacroix was painting the Chapelle des Anges in Saint-Sulpice, Monsieur le Curé was greatly disturbed lest the sanctity of the chapel might be profaned by the famous artist. I hope that I am not profaning the sanctity of your house by sending this simple hymn to Daniela, so that she may familiarize her little fingers with it." And having described its character very minutely in detail, he went on to say: " But the most important thing is that the wondrous genius who in his ever-ascending course has created *Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Tristan, The Mastersingers,* and *The Niblungs* should finish his *Parsifal* where '*Le grand insensé* (*der reine Tor*) ' embraces the divine cross. For it is the cross that will remain victorious over all other wisdom! " There could be no more characteristic contrast than that between Liszt at the Villa d'Este, composing a hymn to the child's guardian angel for the organ at Wahnfried, where *Parsifal* was being written, and the Princess's gloomy room, filled with cigar-smoke, where with Talmudistic erudition she pursued her almost insane ideas on the development of the Church — always interesting, always fanatical, but at long last arousing no stronger emotion than that of a mixture of pity and utter apathy.

Meanwhile the composition of the music for *Parsifal* had also made progress, and it was on Cosima's name-day, which the venerable lady loved and honoured on this account so long as she lived, that the Master completed the Prelude; for, as he said: " It had to be ready for St. Cosmas."

" He played me the Prelude from the orchestral sketch," writes Frau Cosima. " It was long before my emotion subsided. He talked to me of this feature of the mystery of the Grail: that the blood is turned into wine so that we may turn towards earth with increased strength, whereas the turning of the wine into blood leads us away from earth. There is a wonderful admixture of mysticism and chivalry in the Prelude. The modulation into D major signifies to him, as it were, the spread of the tender revelation through the whole world. In order to realize the spiritual quality of the word ' Christ,' set free from all that is material, he means to use a mingling of voices — a baritone voice would make it all material, it must be neither a man nor a woman, but neutral in the highest sense of the word. We talked for a long time about Christ, about the Gospel for the day before the Passion, the sublimest thing humanity has produced, a thing incomparably divine. Then he again played the passage where, as he says, the transfigured glance breaks through; and repeating to myself the words '*es gibt ein Glück, das ohne Reu*' (There lives one joy that brings no pain),' [1] I fell asleep after these hours of consecration." And next day, as she sat among the children, she inked in the pencil-sketch, an old and much-loved custom which she had missed for a long time past; while, as she did so, Richard lamented " that we did not find and love each other twenty years ago. . . . But I remarked that it was a good thing we did so thirteen years ago, at any rate. The act which proved my salvation has brought me a glorious day." And now the daily progress of the composition became the accompaniment of her life. Her existence became a wondrous and almost solemn act of worship. When he said to her: " You and I shall live in men's memories," she replied: " You certainly will," and wrote in her diary: " Adieu, dear, lovely day, may I recall thee in all humility. And I pray my good saint to lay his healing hand upon all my wounds; for my feeling of supreme happiness always brings me back to the thought of that other who is suffering." Curiously enough, on the next day an article by Hans von Bülow on the *Barber of Seville* was sent her. What a contrast! And she writes: " I was affected by this sign of life. It is witty, but the wit hurts me." Her husband entirely endorsed Hans's opinion; but what she most felt was the contrast between these two worlds between which she and her bitter sorrow formed the link. Thus the fundamental idea of *Parsifal*, " made wise through pity (*durch Mitleid wissend*)," acquired for her an increasing and ever more glorified significance, till in the end it absolutely appeased her pain.

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[1] *Lohengrin,* II, ii.—Tr.

I have before my eyes a facsimile of the " Triebschen Idyll," which plays a great part in the story of Frau Cosima's love and spiritual development. One day, soon after their return from London, the Master brought her the poem, which was in some sort a prologue to the *Idyll*. But at the same time he had to disclose to her that he had got to hand over the *Idyll* for publication and public circulation. This was almost contemporaneous with the writing of the libretto of *Parsifal*, and the necessity for giving it up caused her an almost physical pain, which reveals a sort of feminine jealousy of the whole world. It was her very own, and she did not want to let it come into the hands of the profane. But, as always, she yielded and in her diary we find the comment: " The *Idyll* is going off today. My secret treasure is becoming common property, may the joy it will give mankind be commensurate with the sacrifice that I am making." This was on the forty-first anniversary of her husband's first marriage. What had not happened since then! It seemed to her positively ill-omened that this work, which connected him with her and with their " *vita nuova* (new life)," should have to be sacrificed on this very day. At breakfast they played with their wedding-rings; for she wore on her finger " his ring, which Richard had worn on his finger for thirty years."

These were, in general, days of remembrance, and, owing to the loss of the *Idyll*, from which she found it hard to recover, these memories aroused in her a melancholy of a peculiar kind, which she could only overcome thanks to her strong feeling for him and for her mission. But the way in which she overcame it may be seen in the simple verses which she wrote in her diary on November 28, the anniversary of her flight to Triebschen:

Thou who hast found us and bound us
In durance of death for love,
That healest all unhappiness
And makest an end of all distress,
Do thou my refuge prove!
This day of joy that hurt so sore,
Grant me to bless it evermore,
Saviour from life's encircling flood!
Beyond the wreck of Klingsor's magic pile
Here the verdant, happy meadows smile,
Dewed by Amfortas' glowing blood.
Their flowers have they garlanded
To catch the tears that Kundry shed
And sparks that from the flashing Grail outleaped!
By the cry of life's distress,
By the sweets of faithfulness,
Take the greetings these bestow,

Springing from love's hallowed glow,
And today this humble sign accept
Of thine immeasurable grace that brings
This freedom from the whelming flood of things!

On the same day she received the well-known dedication to the published edition of the *Idyll*, which gave her a certain calm or, at least, resignation! And she comments in her diary: "The happiness which we are permitted to enjoy floats before me already like a blissful past, as it will one day appear to our children. My feeling of unworthiness increases daily! O God, thanks be to Thee for Thy grace, grant that I may be worthy of it!" But she could not get over the loss of the *Idyll*. When news arrived that it had been performed at Mainz, she remarked: "I knew, when I made the sacrifice, what a sacrifice it would be. Yet, oddly enough, this news (of the performance of it at Mainz) upsets me as if I had had no idea of it. How could I be more estranged from the world than I am? Never have I had so little part or lot in its joys, never so little understanding of its doings; yet at this very time I have had to surrender my dearest possession to it. I cannot help feeling that I am unworthy of him to whom I have had to give it up, and I hasten away to my room to weep and lament, and once more to admit and acquiesce in the fact that all I find hard is just; all I count dear, only too sublime! Why should I alone be fortunate and blessed! I watch the falling of all the tears which we have shed, I hear the sound of all our laments, and my own lamentation is silent, my tears refuse to flow."

These words give us a wondrous glimpse into the nature of this wonderful woman. We see how utterly she belonged to him both as man and as artist, how she loved the artist in the man, and how, with the most womanly emotion that any woman has ever felt, she embraced the works of the man she loved, together with himself. It was this very feeling that was her great strength, and she really had no time to brood over these gloomy thoughts; for all the joys and sorrows of composition became part of her own experience. Her heart beat with every bar that he composed. On rising from his writing-table he would come straight to her, and the minutest details of the work became all her own, like a beat of the artist's heart.

And so the new year marked no change for her; she lived entirely for *Parsifal* and was completely happy in the joy that he felt in his creative work, which to him was, without a doubt, a new springtime of love. Every day his exultation went out towards her, and she rejoiced even in the touch of jealousy of her time and duties which he displayed. There is a delicious scene when he had to let her chaperon her eldest daughter at a ball at the President's house, after which she found him sitting up waiting for her and celebrated the occasion with merry gossip at home; or when he was pained because she had to go and fetch her daughter from a party, and said that he could not be left alone! There is something so youthful and joyous about it all, and this was undoubtedly all to the advantage of the work; for it was now that he began to be busy with his Flower-maidens, who had themselves had such a fascination for him and caused him uncommon pleasure, difficult though he naturally found the technical solution of this great scenic problem; here too he now found in his discussions with Frau Cosima the happiest and most understanding response to his ideas. We obtain, if we may so express it, one of the most wonderful pictures of an artist's life as we watch *Parsifal* taking shape, follow their daily life together, and see how, when he left his work, he not only told her what he had done, but revealed to her all his mental conflicts and his superhuman striving with this work, in which the chief part was played, not, as might be supposed, by a painful search for melodies, but by holding his prodigious musical imagination in check. Those who would refer to *Parsifal* as a senile work will be entirely converted from their mistaken views by the very circumstances in which it came into being.

There was a curious episode in January, when a very beautiful and moving letter arrived from Hans von Bülow, telling them of his interest in the Master's new libretto, but at the same time showing that he no longer understood either the profoundest principles of his creative work or, still more, his idealized realism; for, like many others, he was shocked at the final words of Gurnemanz, when he is driving Parsifal away:

> Take this from Gurnemanz:
> Leave thou our swans for the future alone,
> And seek thyself, gander, a goose!

Bülow could not help telling Frau Cosima of his horror at such a close to the first act. What is more, we can detect a note of something like pleasure at having caught the great man, whom he himself held to be supremely great, in even a slight weakness: "I was misinformed," he writes, "I thought that the creator of *Parsifal* meant to address himself to the nation, and not only to his church, outside which nobody could surely be found who could endure the tastelessness of the 'goose-swan (*Gansschwan*),' in view of his education and knowledge of Wolfram von Eschenbach." She read these lines sadly, for she already knew the musical setting which the Master had given to these concluding words, of which she says: "Richard showed me the vocal part (*Stimme*), which once more breathes out softly: '*Selig im Glauben* (Blessed in believing)' after Parsifal has been turned out by Gurnemanz. I said to Richard that the music hovers like a magic spell over this abrupt change in Parsifal's imperceptible movements, while the play of light and shade is like the changing hues of the clouds at sunset, and one feels nothing but a constant, unvarying feeling of happiness and well-being, sustained by the blissful element." And she adds: "How does the world support him now! Into the gulf that severs him from the world I cast my love, my poor, infinite love, which yearns for self-sacrifice." And she thought of Hans's words with a touch of melancholy, saying: "People are shocked at the word 'gander.'"

While her mind was busy with these thoughts, her father's letter arrived thanking the Master for the *Siegfried Idyll*, which he had sent to his friend with the words: "By permission of Cosel." Liszt was highly delighted with it and expressed his feelings in two letters, in the first of which he said: "I always feel very stupid when I speak of Wagner's music. It contains so much of what I have most intimately at heart that I seem to be precluded from all praise. All the same, I am writing him a few words about the *Siegfried Idyll,* that wondrous hymn in praise of domestic sentiment! After singing of heroism and the ecstasies of love as no other has done, it remained for Wagner to glorify his son: I hear the *Siegfried Idyll,* and I do not want to hear it in any other way than on your piano at Wahnfried, performed by him who created it, the pure one — *le pur et ingénu et transcendant insensé* (the pure and ingenuous and transcendent fool)." This caused Frau Cosima a remarkable emotion, and her husband too, and with a genuine sense of humour they grasped the contrast, which is indeed most delightful; and she writes: " We are still laughing at the cult of the family on the part of the '*wild, verzweifelte Zwillingspaar* (wild and desperate twin-born pair),'[1] which has become a family." But Liszt's artistic appreciation was deeply stirred, too, for several weeks later he reverted to the subject: " I cannot get away from the *Siegfried Idyll,* and I enjoy it over and over again with delight. No musical work is so instinct with the feeling which Faust expresses in the words:

How each the whole its substance gives,
Each in the other works and lives!
Like heavenly forces rising and descending,
Their golden urns reciprocally lending
With wings that winnow blessing
From Heaven through Earth I see them pressing,
Filling the All with harmony unceasing![2]

He felt the universally human quality which was audible in it, yet he simply could not listen to the public performance which took place in Budapest as early as March, quite apart from his conflicts with the Philharmonic Society, with which Liszt had been very much annoyed for having presented the Master with a swingeing bill for expenses in connexion with his concert. But it could not be otherwise, for here, in fact, he spoke, not only as a father, but as a musician and divined the really great and, in the fullest sense of the word, momentous art-work of the future. As one who had himself opened up new paths in instrumental music by his symphonic poems, he was best able to realize what an important effect this work was bound to produce.

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[1] *Siegfried,* F. Jameson's translation (Schott), Act I, Scene ii.—Tr.
[2] Bayard Taylor's translation.—Tr.

But Frau Cosima could not get over her sorrow at the episode, and when Rubinstein's arrangement of the *Idyll* was played to her by Seidl, she said: " To think that this wondrously delicate work should have gone into the harsh world, which is so alien to us! "

Hence her joy in the steady progress of *Parsifal* was correspondingly great, though, as the Master said in his humorous way: " I am composing all day now, like Raff or Brahms." But, gazing on him with eyes full of delight, she writes: " He is in a magnificent frame of mind, his fine eye is flashing with joy, goodness, and gaiety." And she began to laugh at the errors which accompanied the publication of the *Idyll:* " A lot of nonsense about the *Idyll*! One person discovers the Forest Murmurs in it, another the scene between Fafner and Siegfried, another says that there is not a single motive from *Siegfried* in it." It was like a satyric drama appended to the little spiritual drama through which she had herself passed. But she practised the *Idyll* herself with inexpressible emotion, and while she was playing, he softly joined her and listened. " When I noticed him, he told me that he had written down the first theme that time when I visited him at Starnberg! ' Yes, yes,' he added, ' we know quite well what is the origin of it all.' " And he called to her from the garden that they were living the happiest days of their life. He, too, was bent upon effacing the impression of these periods of gloom and found an easy way of doing this in the deep interest which he enabled her to take in his work. Thus they compared the figures of Alberich and Klingsor, and it was now that he told her that he was once entirely in sympathy with Alberich, who represents the yearning of the ugly towards that which is beautiful. Alberich exemplified the naïveté of the non-Christian world, Klingsor the characteristic contribution of

Christianity to the world. Like the Jesuits, Klingsor did not believe in goodness, he said, and this was the secret of his power, but also of his downfall, for in all the ages the One does, after all, exist once.

At this time took place the visit of Frau von Schleinitz, who brought all sorts of news from Berlin and the world of Bismarck. There is no doubt that Bismarck's internal policy was repugnant to the Master, who was annoyed with himself for no longer being able to follow him as he had once done in the brilliant days of the Franco-Prussian War. Frau Mimi was as amiable and enlivening as ever, yet, for all her subtle capacity for appreciation, it took this discriminating woman some time to grow accustomed to the new atmosphere which had been created by the composition of *Parsifal*. She succeeded in doing so thanks to the deep affection which she cherished for Frau Cosima, and for the Master as well; but Frau Cosima observes: " None of the news which she brings us of the world is particularly gratifying. Such brutality, Socialist intrigues, etc." Frau von Schleinitz gave her Lassalle's book, *Une Page d'amour*, to read, which made a great impression upon Frau Cosima. On the other hand, they were both transported with ecstasy when the Master played them the Prelude to the third act of *The Mastersingers*, saying: " I was a lonely man then."

The hours which she now passed at Wahnfried were, at any rate, beautiful and stimulating, for she received an insight into *Parsifal*, as well as into many other things, especially, for instance, Wagner's views on Weber's works, and more particularly his *Euryanthe*. Besides this she shared in their reading of Scott, who occupied the Master's mind extraordinarily at this time; and it is interesting to read of the preference which he expressed for two things: one of these was the novel, which he considered to possess a poetic significance, even adding that he had a great admiration for the writers of novels, and that their art seemed as incomprehensible to him as his scores perhaps did to others. The other was when, on reading Victor Hugo's *Un Crime*, he assured them that there was really nothing he enjoyed reading more than stories about crime. In this he presents a certain similarity with Bismarck, whose unresting mind found a certain distraction in these productions, which, though superficial, go straight to the heart of human life.

But Frau Cosima had something else to occupy her: a little conspiracy was afoot. Hans von Wolzogen had entered upon his functions as editor of the *Bayreuther Blätter* and as a loyal henchman of the Master's and was becoming more and more at home in the spirit of Wahnfried. A house had been built for him, forming part of what may be called the Wagnerian colony, and it was chiefly with Frau Cosima that he carried on the business of the *Bayreuther Blätter*. This was a new sphere of activity for her, for she discussed with him every essay or article that was sent in and gave her opinion upon the question whether it was to be published or not. In this she gave proof of a remarkable critical sense and absolutely commanding powers of judgment. She took a certain pleasure in this, as in all activities arising out of the Master's ideas and work, now that he was again busy composing; for she looked with no friendly eye upon the festival or upon this new publication, solely out of a feeling that he must have peace for his work in order to finish *Parsifal*, and perhaps *The Victors* too. On the other hand, being no Frigga, she supported him with all her might in all the manifestations of his activity — indeed, so soon as he had embarked upon them, she encouraged and helped him. She rejoiced that a period of such intense creation had set in, of which he himself said: " I am jogging along now (*im Trott*) and only hope that nothing will interrupt me." Thus, while he was in the middle of his *Parsifal*, he wrote those articles for the *Bayreuther Blätter* in which his principles are expounded. For the rest, they had visitor after visitor, and, since the Master's mood was particularly propitious, more than one of these was allowed a glimpse of the new work. Thus on March 14 Eduard Du Moulin came to Wahnfried to give a personal report of the Regensburg *Patronatverein*, which had recently been founded and was already quite strong. Seidl played him the Prelude and after that the entry of the knights into the Castle of the Grail, but could not manage to follow the draft of the orchestral score, upon which, as Frau Cosima writes: " Our good Count sprang to his side and played the upper part. Richard was delighted and said: ' I am pleased when anybody shows capacity.' " And she herself recalled how at Triebschen, when Richard was playing Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine and Loge's teasing merriment (*prickelnde Freude*), she had always taken the upper part, like the Count. These were inspiring days and evenings, during which Frau Cosima exerted her sway; for the state of prodigious excitation in which Wagner lived was often the cause of unbridled and apparently causeless outbreaks of his temper, which might be directed against Seidl or anybody else. On these occasions it was her gentle glance and amiable smile that gradually calmed him, so that he would return quite of his own accord into the former channel of the conversation with absolute kindness and amiability. She felt, of course, that he composed and worked best when he was entirely shut off from the world, so that even Liszt's visits were always a sort of pain to him, in spite of his veneration for him. In spite of all, he was really exceptionally fond of Liszt and, when he was not there, could speak of him most beautifully. Thus one day he deplored people's nastiness to her father: " His life now," she says, " is but that of a shadow. How little men recognize that it was he who opened up the way for Richard! . . . For his pupils said: ' Well, what Liszt can do, we can do too.' ' Yet without Liszt,' so Richard says, ' I cannot conceive what things would have come to. I should have been in the same case as Reissiger's *Schiffbruch der Meduse* (*Shipwreck of the Medusa*).' He also discussed my father's other experiences at the hands of Joachim, Raff, and the rest. ' For,' said Wagner, ' he has been able to do far more for others than I have.' "

But there was another thing about which she consulted Wolzogen: that is, how to get up a particularly beautiful celebration of her husband's birthday. All the children were to take part in it. They were a great joy to her, especially the musical talent of Loldi, who not only seemed to be turning out the beauty of the family, but also possessed an exceptionally rich and fresh feeling for music. While little Siegfried ran about the garden singing or whistling the Klingsor motive, Loldi had composed both the words and music of a song on their dog Marke, which pleased even their father, who sang it merrily when he was walking about the garden with the two children. Thus it was possible for the children to share in getting up a dramatic performance for which Frau Cosima suggested the idea, while Wolzogen was to some extent to give it its outward form. The costumes were prepared with the greatest care, and the rehearsals took place at the Festival Theatre, all being done in the deepest secrecy, till May 22 arrived, and Wagner greeted his wife with the words: "I congratulate myself because you are mine." He was then led into the hall, where a little stage had been put up overnight. The celebration has been described in detail by Glasenapp; but it would be interesting to analyse this charming festival of May from the point of view of distinguishing Wolzogen's share in it from that of Frau Cosima.

While the impression of this birthday party, and of Fidi's, was fresh, she wrote to Malwida, and the way in which this letter supplies, as it were, the psychological background of these events is characteristic. The whole letter is beautiful as evidence of the life at Wahnfried and what they were thinking and feeling during those summer days in the year '78. It runs as follows: "My children are spending this morning at Wolzogen's to hold an extra celebration in the regular German fashion — with the stomach — over a marzipan tart from Brunswick, with the Siegfried theme written all round the top. For the present *en perspective* (I am waiting to see what will happen). I should have preferred a little fruit out of doors to this sweet stuff indoors, but what can one do? And I am really glad this should have happened, for it has enabled me to devote the morning to you, dear Malwida, so that I may pour out my heart, as I always do in writing to you, beneath a lovely sky and amid the song of birds, to which will soon, perhaps, be added the soft strains of *Parsifal*. What I really want is to be able to welcome you here. We shall be staying here for the whole summer, and if you come, it will please me beyond anything. Your cousin has already been grumbling because you have not said a single word about a visit. He is reconciled to it at present, but *gare l'exposition*. . . . It will be a pleasure to me to introduce Wolzogen to you, for he is really an extraordinary man and is gradually becoming quite easy in his bearing here. You will also see

Glasenapp here, and perhaps even Marie Dönhoff herself, who wrote me a perfectly beautiful letter for the 22nd. I am afraid that her physical strength does not allow any possibility of such a complete change as you have in mind. Well, 'all things are after their kind,' says Wotan, 'their kind thou canst not change (*Jedes ist nach seiner Art, daran wirst Du nichts ändern*).'[1] Yet it is beautiful of you to help this good, lovable, and, in my eyes, absolutely innocent creature out of the chaos of her experiences and emotions. If I can support you in this, it shall be done with all my heart and unobstrusively. She wanted me to meet her in Munich, but I wrote that we are stopping at Bayreuth. You are sure to see Lenbach in Munich, he is an extraordinarily loyal and self-sacrificing friend to Marie, his affection for her is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen. . . . We have just celebrated the two birthdays which you remembered so affectionately. The 22nd was so full of the Wahnfried spirit (*wahnfriedlich*) that it will always remain in our memories. It was an old idea of mine to have the four divisions of the day, the seasons, elements, and continents doing homage to the occasion; and Wolzogen grouped these most beautifully round the awakening, lamentation, and rejoicing of Erda, with a prelude of the Norns as introduction, and my children performed the little festival play in the hall in a really incomparable fashion. All their love for their father and their consciousness of his greatness shone in their eyes and in the seriousness of their voices and gestures. It was inexpressibly touching, especially in the pantomime in which Morning, Noon, Evening, and Night moved in procession round Richard's bust, to appropriate music from his works, saluting it and invoking blessings upon it. When you are here, I will show you the words and pictures of it. Daniela declaimed the part of Erda really surprisingly beautifully, with warmth and enthusiasm, and while these moving testimonies of love came from all sides, we silently enjoyed a happiness beyond compare, intimate and pure, which showed itself in tears.

"Siegfried's ninth birthday went off most merrily. Our minds are much occupied with the great question of his education. He is not to go to any school and is not to think for a moment about his career, but is to grow up into a true man, without fear of himself. I call down the blessing of Heaven upon him and am counting very much upon Wolzogen to support us in this plan. The Wolzogens are building themselves a house directly adjoining our garden. . . . Wolzogen's old mother-in-law, Frau von Schöler, is coming to settle here with two other daughters. You see that they are delightfully enthusiastic. Wolzogen is the soul of all these upheavals. After forty years Frau von Schöler is giving up nursing her daughter, which she had regarded as her life-work, and is settling down in a strange land, among people unknown to her. I should like to have Glasenapp here too, and then the education problem would be solved. As to the upshot of it all, Nature will have to see to that. Daniela is leaving me today. I am very sad that she will not enjoy your society. It would be of great value and benefit to her at present.

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[1] *Rhinegold.*—Tr.

"I enclose a letter, in which you will notice that the tone is not free from constraint. I answered in cordial terms, but for the rest I have not referred to anything, or to his book, which Dr. E. regards as marking the early stages of mental derangement. Please note for me whatever fine ideas you find in it. What strikes me most about it is its superficiality and the audacity of his unsubstantiated statements — for instance, the assertion that certain dramatists are bad; the spirits of Goethe, Schiller, Shakspere, Æschylus, Calderón, yes, and of Molière and Racine, rise up before me at such outrageous and downright lies. For your sake I make excuses for Rée in everything, but if his influence has not been a bad one, it has certainly not been a good one either. Wolzogen, too, told me that it spoilt his pleasure in Nietzsche's previous works. For the rest, it will hardly attract much attention, for it contains nothing new."

These words about Nietzsche are highly characteristic of Frau Cosima. We need not go into details here on the subject of how Nietzsche had now entirely turned against Wagner and sharpened his pen for a campaign against the Master, who had, after all, been his teacher, but against whom a feeling of hatred now began to appear in him, which was only comprehensible as a sign of mental derangement. And Wagner could not have done better than give him to understand that, in Nietzsche's own interest, he was not reading the book.[1] But in this tragic turn taken by the character and destiny of a man whom she had regarded as a friend and in whose formation and development she had taken a warm-hearted interest, Frau Cosima saw no more than one of the many cases of apostasy which the Master had had to experience during his long life.

But for a long time Frau Malwida had acted as a link between the suffering Nietzsche and Wagner, whom he had offended, and Frau Cosima went as far as she could to meet this feeling. For both of them, and above all Frau Cosima, had the deepest sense of all that was "human, all too human," in the destiny of individuals as in that of nations. Thus there were few upon whom the catastrophe in Berlin — the attempt upon the life of the aged Emperor — made such a lasting and deeply agitating impression as upon Frau Cosima, and she writes about it to her friend in her characteristic fashion: "The attempted assassination was a great shock to us. Let us hope that the Emperor recovers from it and, in order to maintain a disinterested position, sanctions the view that the murderer is out of his mind. This is what I desire for the old man, whose kind-hearted simplicity rises to the level of grandeur in the way in which he bears this horrible business. But as for the Crown Prince, I hope that this terrible event may open his eyes, and that he may meditate upon the pass to which our Royal Prussian German Empire has brought us. There has been nothing in it but contempt for art and idealism! But everybody seems to be in a state of confusion. Even Moltke himself used unfortunate language about this affair, and the Supreme Consistory (you will laugh at this!), in my opinion, said the right thing when it called for a day of humiliation for the whole nation, to which the *Allgemeine Zeitung* adds a scornful note of exclamation. . . . Must we for ever repeat to ourselves: It is better not to have been born? I cannot do so; for too exalted a destiny has fallen to my lot. Yet at times an inexpressible dread and melancholy steals over my heart, which I might compare to the wounds received by a bird in a strange place, which it still bears with it even when it has returned home and is circling with feelings of happy and rapturous benediction in its native air. Ah, these wounds! Or like the serpent which Dante causes to appear to the blessed spirit before he enters into purgatory lest in his peaceful state of mind he might forget to long for bliss. — And at this moment the '*nehmet hin mein Blut* (Take and drink my blood) ' from *Parsifal* steals upon my ear like a revelation (*Vision*)!

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[1] *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches.* See Glasenapp, VI, 90.—Tr.

" There you have more thoughts and feelings such as I express to none but you, with the exception of Richard; for with you alone do I feel at ease. If you are suffering yet another disappointment, this arises from your inexpressible goodness of heart and was worth more than any certain knowledge. Come as soon as you can. I hope you will like it at Wahnfried, and your rooms shall be arranged as comfortably as we can manage. When you tell me how kindly you think of me, I joyfully take this as a sign of your love, not as though I felt myself to be worthy of it, but as the most beautiful assurance that the yearning of my soul will find the fulfilment which you bless for me by your prophetic vision. What you see now is what I may perhaps be in the hour of death, and your beautiful vision is the dearest prognostic of this."

The children's festival play had really produced a deep impression upon the Master, thanks not only to the bearing of all the children, but also to the delicate sentiment, emanating from Cosima's love, which pervaded the whole libretto. Fidi's birthday was also celebrated in touching fashion, and heightened the affection prevailing between the two parents, and, above all, it produced a profound effect upon the Master's work. Once in later days, when somebody was saying that the figure of Isolde could, after all, only have taken shape under the influence of Frau Mathilde, Wagner said to his wife: " Then you must have been Kundry "; and both of them laughed heartily at the old Emperor's remark that Wagner must have been uncommonly in love when he was composing *Tristan.* But here there was no question of any direct effect upon the work itself, but of the joy and great creative impulse which could have been sustained only by the sympathy of a woman who was as glorious a friend as she was a wife, who protected him from everything without exercising any restraint over him and produced this splendid effect upon him with equally little restraint. And so *Parsifal* was the world in which they both lived. Certainly he had no more understanding listener than his wife. For instance, when, in the great scene between Parsifal and Kundry, he pointed out to her " the moments of dæmonic absorption " which accompany Kundry's kiss and in which the fatal motive of Love's Yearning (*Liebessehnsucht*), infused into it like a poison, enters with shattering effect, she was utterly rapt away into the work. " This poignantly tender Herzeleide motive," she writes, " the sublime melody in which Kundry announces her deliverance from the crushing weight of remorse, all this is so variously articulated, it is so ravishing, yet breathes such pain, that it forms a whole of unfathomable beauty and sublimity. Oh, the glorious one! " And they both laid their finger on the link between *Parsifal* and *The Ring*. Just as they had previously seen in Titurel in some sort the heir of Wotan, so they now recognized similarities between the natures of Wotan and Kundry. Both of these longed for redemption, yet revolted against the bringer of it: Kundry in the scene with Parsifal, Wotan in that with Siegfried. Life was a constant recollection of the past, and when at four o'clock in the morning of the 6th, the hour at which his son had been born, Wagner went into the Orange Salon to wait for sunrise and listen to the birds, this shows what Franz Liszt had meant when he called the *Idyll* a " family composition." Indeed, no husband and wife could have been more touchingly united in their married life.

All this time their minds were equally occupied with the state of the aged Emperor's health and with the Beethoven symphonies. The venerable war-lord's simplicity made the strongest impression upon them, and especially upon Frau Cosima, so that she, who had once called Hans von Bülow a " vile courtier " for playing the piano at court, actually suggested to her husband that he should write to the Emperor on his recovery. But he refused out of a delicate feeling that, in view of the question of a State subvention which had been raised by the *Verwaltungsrat,* such a letter might be misinterpreted.

Now followed days of wondrous creative activity and sympathy. It is as though it all had to find expression in Frau Cosima's whole feeling for nature and art. She saw a swallow circling in the air and watched the lovely little creature with rapture. On the same day she was gazing at the crucifix of Veit Stoss, about which she writes in her diary: " A profound impression! Today in particular, at every stirring of pain and self-love, my thoughts dwell on the face and the pose." Meanwhile there was no lack of pleasant impressions from the outside world, though some of these might cause a certain tension due to suspense. In Frau Cosima's diaries are preserved the many telegrams which came in from all sides in connexion with the performances of the *Nibelung* drama — for instance, the one sent from Munich by Heinrich Vogl, the singer who was taking the part of Siegfried, which the Master answered in the charming words: " If you were to find your wife asleep in the last act, wake her and greet her from me."

Their attitude towards religion at this time is most characteristic, as far removed from insincere formalism as from false mysticism! For here the religious reactions produced upon them by the poetry of the Middle Ages were united with the infinite emotional power of a creative artist. This gave their whole point of view a character that kept them both aloof from all life's trivialities and to some extent, indeed, made their sense of these more acute — even, it must be added, making them impatient with Bismarck and unjust to him. In this lies the real significance of the great historic controversy between Wagner and Bismarck, the two men of genius of the age, each of whom was unique in his sort. So long as he was writing *The Ring* and had to deal in a " sombre yet joyous " mood (*düster und heiter*) with heroes, he could still sympathize with Bismarck. But now that pity appeared to him as the guiding force of his hero, he regarded the statesman with quite other eyes; not that he had withdrawn from the profane world, but, all the same, he regarded its problems from another point of view than before. Not that he did not allow due weight to practical considerations — and in all these questions Frau Cosima not only was associated with him in all his political ideas, but was, in a certain sense, their embodiment and motive force. The ideas which he formulated quite clearly at this time and demanded on behalf of Germany were those which have been the salvation of social democracy and the State in English politics. We intimated that social democracy was productive of no results in politics and could lead to nothing but utter nonsense. It was solely a question of obtaining satisfaction for the just demands of the community in individual cases; a piece of statesmanlike wisdom in the carrying out of which the future of Germany is involved, and the negation and neglect of which has brought about the whole catastrophe of modern times. It cannot be enough emphasized that not only did political ideas play their part, then as always, in the life of these two at Wahnfried, but they also thought them out in the most whole-souled and sincere fashion, above all — and this is the principal point — translating them into action. It was undoubtedly pity that inspired their ideas, in individual cases as well. For instance, there was a wretched employé at a brewery who had fallen into the brewing-vat, and since at that time no laws existed providing for insurance against accident, the honest brewer refused to take the poor fellow into his house, as did also the unfortunate man's father, and even the hospital, since there was nobody forthcoming to pay for him. The Master and his wife were terribly upset and did what the man's employer and parents, and even the authorities, were unwilling to do: they had him taken to the hospital at their own expense, where, though so fatally injured that he was bound to die, the man could, at any rate, die a less agonizing death after some weeks than would otherwise have been his fate. This trait was characteristic of both their natures; and whether the initiative came from the Master or from her, they were always in accord in their deep affection for their fellow-men.

At this time an outbreak of proscription and brutal denunciations was raging in Berlin and had even spread to Bavaria, where the famous Piloty disgraced his art by base delation; yet at this time Wagner had the spirit to say jestingly that if copies of the *Bayreuther Blätter* had been found in the possession of the assassins, this paper would have been held responsible for the whole movement. Yet these articles of the Master's, a large number of which had their origin in his wife's sympathetic feelings or even arose originally from her prompting, indicated many ways which might have led to a certain improvement in the future. This, too, was an occupation which they shared, and when during their "beautiful morning talks" Frau Cosima challenged him to write on any subject, and he replied with a smile: "*Hier ist Tinte, Feder, Papier, ich schreibe auf, diktiert ihr mir* (Ink, pens, and paper, here they be, I'll write; do you dictate to me)," his allusion to the scene of the morning in Hans Sachs's workshop[1] has a certain significance; for not one of his articles was written without his discussing it with his wife. He naturally required none but the slightest incentive to write, and this again was only possible thanks to his wife's exceptional and almost clairvoyant sensibility and receptivity. But it was a beautiful comradeship, and the spirit of happiness and of art hovered over it at every hour, while their whole life was endowed with an overflowing measure of mystic love. The artist's high spirits also found an outlet, especially during his outings with the family. For on May 22 Frau Cosima had presented her husband with the famous carriage which was afterwards so often seen and joyfully saluted in the neighbourhood of Bayreuth; for they became more and more identified with their charming and simple surroundings and every day proved the truth of the old saying that the artist must work in solitude. He was able to live entirely in his work, and exercise his creative impulse through it; and now the prodigious wealth of his imagination was more than ever revealed, so that he did not, like so many composers of symphonies, have to search for modulations one by one, but out of the fullness of his musical ideas had simply to choose those that would maintain the drama on the transcendental heights on which he had given it its being.

Add to this that in Wolzogen he had gained a splendidly tactful listener with fine sensibilities, who understood everything, or at least learnt to understand it; for he entered most touchingly into their life and felt that here in Bayreuth, with which he had thrown in his lot independently, he had found something which existed nowhere else in the world. Indeed, all who came in contact with Bayreuth felt this. In this connexion we might almost say that, without knowing it, Wagner was himself led and guided by Frau Cosima's hypnotic suggestion. And so everything was smoothed out. The antagonisms which produced a disturbing effect fell into the background, though others of a more permanent nature came more sharply into prominence; for what now most occupied her and their friend Gross was how to clear up their financial position, and she effected this by offering her own fortune, behind her husband's back, as security for the necessary loan. When Wagner heard of this, he was sad indeed, but she succeeded in putting the matter before him with such convincing sweetness that he reconciled himself to a situation which their chivalrous champion would certainly never have brought about if it had really been likely to endanger this noble woman's fortune. But most of all it was through her mediation that the King was induced to act as guarantor and assume responsibility for the deficit, which was not precisely an act of grace and favour, for the debt was to be paid out of the Master's own receipts, and therefore by his own efforts. And it must here be emphasized that all the King did for Wagner and for Bayreuth, so far as finance was concerned, was paid back, down to the last penny, by the Master and his heirs. Any representations to the contrary may be counted among the wretched lies and low gossip to which there is no end in artistic life.

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[1] *The Mastersingers*, III, ii.—Tr.

Nietzsche's condition caused them gloomy reflections. Matters had not yet reached such a pitch that his attacks upon Wagner, his abominable treatment of him, and the arrogance and presumption of which he now made a public exhibition in opposition to the Bayreuth idea could possibly be attributed to mental disease. Not only was the superficiality of his attacks increasing, but the tactlessness of their form too; yet during all these dark days Frau Cosima kept in touch with his noble-minded sister and, as we see from her letters to Malwida, addressed her with the sisterly *Du*, even after her brother's outbursts against Bayreuth had begun. But it was not his insults and abuse that hurt them; it was their disappointment at the defection of a man in whom they had had entire confidence and whom the Master had loved. And Frau Cosima could not help remarking, apropos of his *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* (*Unseasonable Reflections*), that according to this book Nietzsche's earlier books were nothing but reflected opinions, which did not spring from his inward nature — or "*Réekleckse* (Rée's blots)," as Wagner soothed his sombre mood by calling them, playing, in his humorous way, upon the name of Nietzsche's friend Rée, whom he considered to have an unfortunate influence upon him. But she was pained by this deterioration in one who had once been their friend and by the impossibility of judging his condition otherwise; and he was one of those with whom they entirely severed all connexion, Richard remarking: "It is no great honour to me that he praised me." And when a certain melancholy came over him at such experiences, and she asked him anxiously: "Are you dissatisfied with life?" he would answer: "Not with life itself, but with having to be in contact with life (*Nicht mit* dem *Leben, sondern* mit *dem Leben*)."

But he would not allow himself to be distracted from composition — on the contrary; so the summer passed by amid regular work, and we might well invert the saying: "Life is serious, but art is cheerful (*Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst*)" and say instead: "Art is serious, but life is cheerful"; for their life was entirely permeated by that wonderful humour which awoke in him so soon as he left his writing-table and shook off the abstracted mood of artistic inspiration. This filled her soul with perfect happiness, for she had the deepest and most joyous comprehension for it all; and if by chance her sensibility grew less acute, she bowed her will in deepest submission before his creative work and also before his moments of fame. This undoubtedly acted as a counterpoise to Nietzsche: if he intended to do them harm, he failed; if he wanted to impress them, that failed too. But if he wanted to cause them pain, he succeeded to the full, and the upshot of it all was a deep feeling, not of contempt, but of indifference.

One remark of the Master's about his wife sounds very different from the philosophy of Nietzsche; for the only thing for which he would chide her was her excessive and exhausting activity, and he once said to her in a tone of merry reproof that what she lacked was " the philosophy of the forenoon (*Philosophie des Vormittags*)," a saying of which the effect lingered on in her for a long time. But she could not shake off her anxiety: the slightest fluctuation in the Master's condition alarmed her, and up to the last ill-fated February 13 the sombre presentiment of his death never left her for a single moment when she was alone.

She gave a touchingly hospitable reception to all who came to Bayreuth, a welcome guest among whom was Levi, who kept coming to ask advice with a view to the performances in Munich, though his native shrewdness enabled him to see quite clearly that a good performance of *The Ring* was unthinkable outside Bayreuth. He had some most original observations to make upon the Jews, which struck them with great force, and when Levi said that, as a Jew, he considered himself a " walking anachronism," Wagner himself refuted this by answering that, since the Catholics considered themselves grander than the Protestants, then the Jews must be the grandest of all, for they were the most ancient. And this son of the Rabbi at Giessen was really sensible of the full profundity of *Parsifal*, and in after days was its best conductor.

Yet there was no lack of depressing factors, among which were the news about the King, who, by instructions from Berlin, was now only allowed out with an escort of gendarmes; and the Nietzsche affair, about which Wagner said sorrowfully: " It is not so easy to forget this. Our circle is too small for it to be possible not to keep coming across the same experiences over and over again." So at times even her heart would sink, and at the beginning of July we find in her diary words of heart-felt lamentation, opening with Goethe's verses:

Der Du von dem Himmel bist,
Alles Leid und Schmerzen stillest,
Den, der doppelt elend ist,
Doppelt mit Erquickung füllest.

(Thou that art from heaven sent,
Every pain and sorrow stillest,
Him whom grief has doubly rent
Doubly with refreshment fillest.)

" Thus does my soul call upon Him. My night became overcast, grievous thoughts weighed upon me, and it seemed as though my poor over-wearied brain would refuse to act. Gloomy weather, not a bird singing, all this was surely responsible for my mood: and now in the early morning a wondrous theme is heard from Richard's room, and the spectres that haunt me by day and night are gone. ' A theme for a quartet for you,' said Richard, coming in to see me." And she was able to add: " The news that Hans is well seemed to me to be in harmony with the spirit of the day, as though every blessing had come to me from this morning greeting." And everything was joyful in its effect — every blackbird's note and every word he said to her both in the morning and in the evening; only she always felt alarmed when he spoke of his age and said that he would have to live to be ninety-four if she meant to grow as old as her father was then. She indeed replied: " I shall stay with you." And when he asked: " But what do we do with life? " her answer was: " We comfort each other for living."

In between times she was arranging the Master's manuscripts with Glasenapp, who had come to Bayreuth for this purpose and in order to take notes for the Master's biography. This indefatigable collector brought a quantity of long-forgotten youthful articles which he had unearthed, so that this section of the Wahnfried archives could gradually be brought to a certain degree of completeness. The Master, too, took a pleasure in this work, though, for instance, he could not bear to listen to an article by Glasenapp which sang his praises, and when the author read it out, he simply rushed out of the room. On the other hand, it is most delightful to read how he would apply historical analogies to his wife, as, for instance, when he read in Thierry's *Récits mérovingiens* the interesting and characteristic, rather than attractive, life of St. Radegundis, which, however, he humorously applied to Frau Cosima, saying: " Now I know what you are driving at: you want to live like St. Radegunde, to adorn the Beloved's table and arrange flowers for it, but to eat nothing and possess nothing yourself."

But, anxious as she was about his intellectual heritage, she was even more so about his health: " I know few things harder than the struggle to conceal my anxiety. But I succeed! The society of our friends, all so shy and constrained, especially the good Germans! I laughed, and said that I was coming more and more to understand the ethos of court jesters — that is, whenever one is forced to keep up a sort of court or party existence. He laughed, and when I appeared at dinner in the gaily coloured dress that he likes, he said: here was Harlequin's costume all ready." Yet inwardly she had no heart for gaiety; but she was consoled by the infinitely touching affection for her which he displayed — for instance, when he said: " Let us cling together and become more and more one with each other "; or when, starting from such remarks, he would look back into the past and repeat the most beautiful and touching things to her in his own fashion. How deep this feeling was can be seen from the words which she once wrote in her diary: " As we parted, Richard spoke to me in such a tone that I have not the courage to write it down here, scarcely even to treasure it in my heart. ' But what do I say? ' he concluded; ' if I call you " unique," that still presupposes a comparison of some sort.' " On the other hand, she was acutely aware of his passionate temperament, which was always breaking out, and she remarks: " He alone of all mankind keeps up a flaming indignation in every sphere."

It so happened that a boy died of a box on the ear graciously bestowed upon him by a worthy man with a strong sense of his own importance; whereupon the Master flew into a fury of indignation both at this action and at the verdict of the court, which had acquitted the brutal fellow. She entirely shared his feelings, though she quite understood what he said about the exigencies of men of genius — whether Beethoven, her father, or others — and she felt it to be all the more her duty to take care of him and watch over him. The way in which they entered into each other's lives and feelings was really wonderful, even when they went out into the world. For instance, they went with the children to see some rope-dancers, when she sat at Wagner's side with her eyes shut, while he, who had never felt the slightest trace of giddiness and had performed the most daring feats, admired the way in which the young man's knee glided swiftly over the tight-rope, after which he pressed a handsome present into the dancer's hand, saying: " You have great talent " — upon which she remarks: " How much more pleasure it gives one to indulge in a little extravagance on an occasion like this than to pay for a place in any theatre! " In short, they enjoyed everything with a sort of *joie de vivre*, though this had its roots in intense resignation. When they visited the Festival Theatre together and looked at its internal arrangements — for instance, the mirrors in the royal *salon* (*Fürstensalon*) — he remarked that, strictly speaking, these mirrors belonged to nobody; to which she replied: " Yes, this is surely the only possession without a possessor (*Besitz ohne Besitzer*)." Or when he said that he would not care to go through the performances again. But, all the same, they were both glad that the house was still standing: " It looked like an eternal sunset beneath the trees, its simple polychromy gave us pleasure. Richard's radiant goodness and serenity are inexhaustible. Oh, had I but the strength and the power to raise a fitting monument to him! The glory of Beatrice, though exalted by Dante, yet collapsed into nothingness. It was he himself who left his own memorial in the minds of mankind. What I should like is that my children should know him fully through me, so that when we have gone hence, they may love him as a god. Oh, might I but succeed in this! "

On the whole, her mood was an exalted one. When he offered her a tea-rose, saying that its fragrance was as intoxicating as sweet poison, she replied: " Yes, that is something like the melody of your ' Flower-maidens.' " Such were the hours of leisure and stimulating moments of which she said that, in such sustained conversations as these, they were both borne along as on a broad stream: " I am only content when I can throw open my whole heart to him, that he may purify and uplift it." Yet she understood that he must be left quite alone when at work, though he positively apologized for this, like a young lover: "Of course you enter wholly into me and are always with me; it is only as a separate individual that you may not appear before me at such times." And so she pursued her life at his side and entered into every aspect of his nature, receiving instruction, but at the same time managing to place her own ideas before him. Nothing can be more interesting than what she says about Wolfram von Eschenbach's "ideas": "In Wolfram, as in Ariosto, and even in Byron, we ought to lay stress chiefly upon his powers as a story-teller, instead of for ever harping upon the 'fable of his profundity (*Mär des Tiefsinns*)'" — in which Wagner entirely agreed with her. During their conversations about religion, too, she expressed opinions which were quite her own; so that he once observed that they ought to write dialogues — for instance, on the subject of optimism and pessimism — in which, he added with a smile, he would naturally play the fool's part. In addition to this they daily celebrated the recurring anniversaries, and the visitors to Bayreuth also prompted such considerations as these. It was at this time that Berthold Kellermann, a pupil of her father's and afterwards director of the Munich Academy, came to Bayreuth on Liszt's recommendation to teach the children the piano, and she describes him as follows in a postscript to her father's letter: "A pleasant man with fine features, upon which life's worries have already left their mark"; while the Master good-naturedly remarked that they must nurse him well (*aufpäppeln*). This was necessary not only physically, but spiritually too; for in his piano-playing he at once revealed all the faults of a budding virtuoso which were characteristic of her father's pupils, though not of his method; for they all thought that they, too, were bound to display what in him was a natural and elemental power, and wasted the best part of their strength in this. A moment therefore came when the good and noble-minded Kellermann retired, sad and silent, to his room; but the Master crept up after him and saw how the poor fellow was sitting with his face hidden in his hands. He went in, and Kellermann poured out his heart to him, saying: "I know, Master, that I am not good enough for you"; upon which he comforted him by replying: " You are not good enough for yourself." He adopted him as a disciple and revealed to him what is the finest wisdom for an artist — not to approach a musical work from outside, merely in order to show off his own ability, but to study the work and reproduce it again out of himself, thus, as it were, creating it anew. It may indeed be said that these days spent at Bayreuth formed a unique and characteristic period, and they were able to look out calmly upon the world. When Feustel expounded his attitude towards the anti-Socialist laws and socialism in general, Wagner entirely refuted it after his own fashion and gave him hints that might have been useful to Feustel as a politician too.

And now came visitors: first the Countess Voss, followed on August 20 by Liszt, whom Frau Cosima found looking better than he had done for years, and both gay and talkative — " a joy to Richard and me." It did her heart good when she talked to her husband in the morning about her father's aristocratic and unique nature: " Everything about him is distinguished, princely, grandiose, and, with all this, full of artistic genius." It caused them a certain merriment when the Baroness Meyendorff at once came over from Weimar to visit Wagner and to see Liszt. He played various things, among others Bronsart's *Fantaisie*, and they both admired the kindliness and indulgence with which he judged such feeble productions. Naturally, her father's presence always meant a difficult time for Frau Cosima; for at any moment she might expect an outbreak of her husband's jealousy. This time, however, the contrary was the case. The Master spoke of how spiteful others were to Liszt — for instance, Berlioz — and played him " *Komm, holder Knabe,*" [1] and since Liszt was in the highest degree enchanted by it, he performed the whole of the second act up to the scene of the kiss, so that Frau Cosima writes: " Richard was enthusiastic at the fascination which the divine work exerted over my father, and radiant with genius, greatness, and goodness."

Next came round the anniversary of their wedding-day. The children congratulated them, Loldi presented them with a watercolour painted by herself, and Wagner talked of how their life had turned out and how it ought to have turned out: " I ought to have taken you off with me to Venice that time in Zürich. I had finished with my wife, the situation as regards Hans had not become so definite, and you had no children. But I was as stupid as Tristan, and you were a *dumme Liese* (silly girl), an Isolde. We should have stayed in Italy, and everything would have been sensible and rational." On the next day, after Frau von Meyendorff had taken her leave, he played her father the rest of the second act, which aroused his highest admiration, whereupon the Master said: " I am content, I have had a success with you again "; and she wrote in her diary: " My enthusiasm is the tear that flows at this revelation." But the full depths of her veneration for her husband are revealed in a poetic composition, to which she herself gave the name of " Litany," which she laid upon his table at a later date:

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[1] *Parsifal*, Scene II.—Tr.

Thou who art sinless,
Sublimely yearning,
Greatly renouncing,
Thoughtful and steadfast,
Cautious and patient,
Never daunted, but true to thy mission;
Inconstant, yet holy,
Impatient, yet consecrate,
Sublimely unthinking,
Who dost flee from illusion!
Creator destroyer,
Wasting but to order,
Prince of the lowly,
Careless of glory,
Free from all vanity;
Lightly reckless,
Yet full of forethought;
Knowing no jealousy,
Lavish in giving,
Utterly selfless,

Remote in profundity,
Mighty in inspiration,
Whose speech is as fire,
Whose silence doth glow,
Believing, though hopeless,
Inexorable to evil,
Victorious over weakness,
Proclaimer of truth,
Dispeller of shams,
Boldly unmasking,
Yet gently veiling,
Versed in love,
Lavish of life,
Strange to the world,
Yet Nature's confidant,
Seer of what is,
Lord of what seems,
Commanding illusion,
Rejoicing in will,
Achieving redemption,
Creator of bliss,
Seeing all, knowing all, turning all to music,
Past comprehension,
Guiltless and free,
A child, yet a god.

And to these words, which overflowed from the fullness of her woman's heart and characterized his nature in wondrous wise, she added as a sort of refrain, in the fashion of a litany: " Richard, love me ever (*Richard, behalte mich lieb*)."

He was deeply moved when she subsequently gave it him, and asked her whether she had shown the lines to Malwida, who was then on a visit to them and had been staying at Wahnfried for some time. She replied with a smiling " No "; upon which he said that he would not have made a secret of anything so beautiful. But such was her feeling, the expression of which she confided only to him, and frequently not even to him, but to her diary alone.

To him this was a sort of set-off against the increasingly gloomy thoughts caused him by Nietzsche's defection. The conduct of this man for whom he had once had such a warm affection haunted him even in dreams; and Frau Cosima was indeed right when she wrote to her friend Mimi about the unfortunate man's latest book: "I have not read Nietzsche's book. It was enough for me to look through it and pick out a few pregnant sayings, after which I laid it aside, *ad acta*. This marks the completion of a process in the author which I have seen coming for a long time past and against which I have fought with what little power I have. Many things went to the making of this miserable book! Last of all Jewry, in the person of one Dr. Rée — a very sleek, very cold person, to all appearance entirely influenced and dominated by Nietzsche, but in reality making a dupe of him — an illustration on a small scale of the relation between Judea and Germania. Nietzsche used to know nothing about Voltaire or French literature. I would not mind wagering that he knows absolutely nothing about them even now. He can no longer relieve his mind and wanted to throw it all off; but he committed a breach of loyalty towards Schopenhauer and Wagner. Malwida absolutely denies any bad influence on the part of Dr. Rée, of whom she is very fond. But her great heart lays her open to deceptions, and I think that my view is a just one. She also begs me not to give up Nietzsche, but I have the commentary on every sentence that I have read, and I know that the bad element has gained the upper hand here. It is very sad, because of the impression which it makes upon our friends. Young Dr. Schemann deplores the book, yet considers it the finest thing ever written. Malwida discovers wonderfully fine ideas in it, and even Wolzogen, who is as true as steel, says that he cannot bear to read the earlier works now. I see none of all this; I can only see a most sad experience extending over some years. As for Wagner himself, he says that once a flower sprang from this bulb, but now nothing but the bulb is left — a really disgusting object. The swift vision of a man of genius gives him a power over others, as Napoleon proved at Arcole, but this is denied to others."

For the rest, in spite of Malwida's partisanship of Nietzsche, her presence was a comfort and pleasure to them both, and her stay was prolonged for longer than she had hoped. This time, too, Liszt carried away the most beautiful memories with him from Bayreuth to his beloved Rome. But at Wahnfried the composition of *Parsifal* went quietly on, and the diary, as it were, throws light upon the genesis of the music after its own fashion. "One morning he came and played me the passage: '*Ich sah ihn und lachte, da traf mich sein Blick* (I saw Him and mocked Him; He gave me one look)' and then remarked: 'I am curious to know whether you will recognize the glance.' 'It is that of Dürer's *Christ* at Nuremberg, is it not?' I said, and he answered yes." How entirely out of keeping with this life was the apparition of a Protestant pastor, who announced himself to the Master as a mission-preacher against the "*Seejungfern*" ("mermaids" — i.e., Rhine-maidens), and tried to convert him, in a scene worthy of the Salvation Army, which, though it caused Frau Cosima annoyance at first, was afterwards a source of endless merriment. And as he sportively called her his "slender fortune (*schlankes Glück*)," he said, apropos of the pastor, who had just come from a conference "for the promotion of Christian ideas": "They wanted me to write music to some such words as: 'Beware of fat women.'" And he played her the scene[1] in which Kundry sings: "*Lass mich Dich Göttlichen lieben* (Let me but love thee, divine one)," in which, by means of the theme of the Flower-maidens, he enables us to feel, through the wild words, in an absolutely divine fashion the sweet all-powerfulness of love's longing. Next he felt impelled to play her *Tristan*, about which she writes: "He plays so beautifully — nay, far more than beautifully: wonderfully — that it is as though my ear distinguished the strains that shall make me happy even in death." And noticing her emotion, and wishing to allay it, he said: "This is perfectly voluptuous (*Das ist ein Schwelgen*), absolutely made for Berlin and Niemann." But she remained serious: "This work is a sequel to the other. *The*

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[1] *Parsifal*, Scene II.—Tr.

Twilight of the Gods is a tragedy of destiny, but what is the love-scene in *The Valkyrie* compared to this desire for death alone? " To which he replied: " Ah, all of us have been through it all — you too, my wife. You know my youthful ballad of the swan that prevents the boy from throwing himself into the water? You were the swan, which caught me up and then drew me to you." " I was so deeply affected," she adds, " that I was no longer in a condition to understand or say anything." But he went on: " It was necesary for me to give vent to my feelings (*mich auszurasen*) in music, just as though I had written a symphony " — to which she replied: " How I regret that I was not with you earlier! " And he said: " Yes, I was born too soon. I ought to have come under the influence of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. Your father was indeed a blessing to me." Next he laughed at the idea that Polish Jews would soon be enjoying *The Ring* at Leipzig, and remarked: " My whole audience at *Das Liebesverbot* (*The Ban on Love*) consisted of one of them." And so they gossiped, finding connexions between the past and the present, for which, indeed, there was plenty of occasion, especially in his retrospect of the festival, which he discussed with her exhaustively. And now Glasenapp sent all sorts of interesting things, among others a piece by Wagner's stepfather, Geyer: *Das Erntefest* (*The Harvest Home*); but he rejected this, for the " Kotzebue of Dresden's " type of drama was not pleasing to him, and he remarked that great geniuses ruin lesser talents, just as Shakspere did everything beside himself. And she admitted this: " I told him that by comparison with Shakspere all other poetry seemed to me like the plastic arts of the Renaissance compared to the antique." This led him to speak of the literary world of Dresden, and then of Weber and his funeral in Dresden. How fortunate he had been on that occasion! he said. It had been one of the finest experiences in his life. At the end, when Frau Devrient had stepped forward from the orchestra with the laurel-wreath, " we exchanged a memorable glance." — And so October 10 came round, on which they celebrated their silver wedding, for it was twenty-five years ago that they had met for the first time in Paris. It was on this occasion that she first laid the " Litany " on his table. In the evening they went out on the balcony of the " children's room (*Kindersaal*) " by moonlight. The garden lay before them bathed in light, and he said: " Why need we look further afield? What is any Palazzo Colonna to me? It is all cold and null." And Frau Cosima told him " that he willed what I only wished."

The conclusion of the second act was now really approaching. He was already thinking over the orchestration and said that it must be quite different from that of *The Ring*. In the *Nibelungen* he had felt that he had not got singers adequate to the orchestra, the buskin which he had provided for them was too high, and so the singers had been unable to gain the mastery over it.

Yet at this very time a little jar between them occurred, which enables us to look right into Frau Cosima's soul. He had declared to her that he often asked himself whether she were real, whether it were not a dream that had given her to him; and now he brought her a letter of his to the King and read it to her, which caused her to write: " A most strange and indescribable feeling came over me when I read at the end of it that Richard's soul belonged for ever to the King. It was like a serpent's tooth at my heart, and I really do not know what I should prefer. I should not like what he has written to be a mere phrase, yet I should not like it to be true, and even if it were in my power to do so, I would not have it unwritten; for all he does is well done. Yet I suffer and pine in the effort to conceal my suffering. All hail, sorrow, I am ready to greet thee as a guest! I can once more approach him with serene composure, and how it purifies me to think that I may deem myself worthy to be at his side! "

It may indeed be said that this was an involuntary outcome of the whole relation which had developed between them, into which, touching though it was, another spirit had none the less entered, owing to the intrusion of outside elements. And now, on the 11th, he came to her with the news that the second act was finished, and said that he ought really to have finished it by the 10th, but that it would have been too much for him to have written it all down. After he had played her the second act, she writes: " Where am I to find words to express my happiness? And in the evening Richard said: ' Anyone who had come in and seen us like that would have taken us for two mad things.' I devouring the notes, and ever and anon helping, divining his meaning, frantic with excitement. It is my pride and joy that I could really follow him and that everything was revealed to me." But immediately after he had played it, the Master announced his intention of refusing to produce the work in public, but of simply paying back their money to the members of the *Patronatverein*. But what did all these questions signify as compared to the joy and grandeur of the moment? He was himself sensible of the joy of having advanced so far; and he at once proceeded with the composition, for which purpose he got out all the earlier sketches, of which he had made no use; upon which she writes: " He brought me a number of pages, some even out of *Tristan*. I begged him to keep them all for me as a Christmas present and am already rejoicing in them by anticipation, though I have not yet seen them." And he remarked: " Like Frederick the Great, I am now collecting the *fuyards* (fugitives) " — that is, all the musical ideas that he had hastily jotted down. He sang the melody " *Am Morgen nach der Weihnacht* (The Morning after Christmas) " and thought about a revision of *The Flying Dutchman*. Senta's ballad was too much in the folk-vein, he said, to be quite characteristic enough for the Dutchman. And in the evening he read her and her two daughters *Ein Ende in Paris* (*The End of a Musician in Paris*) and harrowed their feelings thoroughly, " for there was a genuine piece of Richard's nature in it, described by himself." How touching, too, was another scene which took place between them! After a wonderful walk, during which they talked affectionately of their beloved Bayreuth, they were reading [Leopardi's] *Porphyrius* in the evening, and he was led to talk of suicide and, in the same connexion, of their own destiny; and she enters in her diary: " What is all one's suffering and misery compared with this moment? Only to hear from his own lips that it is not the joy of creation, but our love, that causes him to forget the misery. Poor blissful creature that I am! I take leave of this day as though in an intoxication of ecstasy; what life, what death, could outweigh this? When he said that suicide was the supreme assertion of the will, I replied: 'Oh, do not say that, I will not live without you.' To which he replied:

'That is another matter.' He said that L. was trying to escape from the cholera! That is, a man wants to be master of his own fate and not allow a crude force to have the power of life and death over him."

Then again they both went to the little room at Angermann's café which the local notabilities frequented, and she was amused at being addressed as "Frau Meister" and at the whole "adventure." Their life was a ceaseless process of mutual stimulation, and all the ideas he expressed were of a lofty nature, as, for instance, when he said on one occasion: "In moments of heightened emotion melody surpasses everything, even the most graceful gesture. It is a sort of creation in itself." Or when they read Luther's *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation* (*To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*), and he remarked: "Just such a letter ought to be written now about the Jews as was then written about Rome! Yes, but to whom?" "I said jestingly," she comments, "that the letter ought to be written to the Socialists, then." And she adds: "He is the only man whose heart beats like this — full of a mighty indignation tinged with pity." Or it so happened that they were talking about religious matters, and how the misfortune of Protestantism was its theology. The apostles were the only men, he said, who called things by their name.

And so October 22 came round — the date of her father's birthday. Wagner, too, was in the best of spirits, and they sent Liszt a telegram in Latin: "*Magnificat anima nostra Patrem Optimum Franciscum. Ricardus Cosima cum Familia* (Our soul doth magnify Franz, the best of fathers. Richard, Cosima, and family)." Liszt was delighted at receiving this telegram and thanked them most cordially. On September 27 he had written to her from the Villa d'Este at Tivoli on the occasion of her name-day: "For many years past I have dedicated the closing days of September especially to you. And so I did this time on the 27th, the feast of your patron saint, St. Cosmas. My whole heart was with you. Even the breviary arrested my attention on that day. It tells how, as much through the merit of Jesus Christ as by their medical skill, Cosmas and his brother Damian, two famous physicians from Arabia, healed diseases which had been considered incurable. The canon of the mass names them *infra actionem* — that is, a moment before the change in the Host! What sturdy and courageous martyrs! They were thrown into the sea, cast into chains; and, throwing off their chains, they regained life and liberty. The prefect Lysias ascribed this miracle to the power of magic, so sent them back to prison, and next morning to the stake. When the flames spared them, he ordered various tortures, all of which were equally ineffectual, and then at last they were set free. '*Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis* (All that is transient is but a symbol)': without haste, without prison, stake, or a ducking — in the purely literary sense of the words — you possess and have maintained an enduring courage, worthy of your patron saint Cosmas, and therefore you are and always will be my beloved daughter, the one and only Cosima (*Cosima unica*)."

Next, recalling Wahnfried and its denizens, both human and animal, he writes delightfully: "Only think: immediately below my window there is a gallery with some twenty fowls. Their little home (*casino*) is not so brilliant as that of your fowls at Wahnfried. High walls cut them off from all other living creatures. They are, as it were, in a convent, and the noble proximity of peacocks and pheasants is denied them. In spite of this, they seem lively, and the cock too. I feed them with extra rations of bread and cheese. During the last fortnight I have almost finished my *Via Crucis:* fourteen little pieces, which I might call short prayers for organ or piano. Though this sort of music is by no means adapted to the taste of the drawing-room, I mean to publish my Stations of the Cross at the same time as the Hymn to 'Brother Sun,' 'Sister Moon,' 'Brother Sea,' 'Brother Wind,' etc., in honour of St. Francis of Assisi."

We see how modestly he refers to his works by comparison with the one which was being composed at Bayreuth, though with a certain sense of the connexion between them, in idea as well as in feeling; for he closes his letter with the words: "Laud, honour, and glory to *Parsifal*!" Not only from the purely religious point of view, but out of his heart-felt appreciation of the work, he felt it important to keep up these artistic associations with Wahnfried at this particular time; and they shared his feelings, for a few weeks later Liszt was able to write: "What a kingly crown Wagner bestowed upon me on October 22. His letter on *Dante* stirred me to the depths of my soul, and while well aware that such a judgment is stronger than my own talent, I accept it with a deep feeling of true, Christian, and most serene joy. You, beloved Cosima, know quite well that if I have been accused of vanity, it is false. At the time of my first feeble works I sinned rather through excess of modesty, and I do so all the more now, the more inadequate they seem to me. If I continue to work none the less, that is because I feel an inward compulsion and a sense of professional duty, which spur me on. Every man must honestly pursue some profession or another. Mine is that of making and writing music, without indulging in any illusions about the success of my efforts. Yet in this connexion I am absolutely sure of myself and full of confidence. It is *Parsifal* that has consecrated me! No sovereign on earth could bestow such a high reward upon me, and I should be ashamed to accept any lesser one. And what perfect beauty was shed upon the feast of October 22 by the Latin telegram, signed Ricardus and Cosima! Yes, my dear ones, you shower goodness upon me. I am glorified in you, and I pray God that I may be able to pay my debt to you in time and eternity." With regard to practical matters, he writes: "Feustel's letter gave me great satisfaction. Thanks be to Heaven and to King Ludwig II of Bavaria! The idiotic remarks, comments, and gossip of public and private enemies about the bad condition of Bayreuth will now have to undergo a change in the near future." He next went on to speak of Leo XIII, who was shortly to receive him in audience, and in this connexion quoted a remark made to him lately by the Count Gobineau, "a man of learning and poetic talent," who had been French Minister in Persia, Brazil, Athens, and Stockholm and was one of Frau von Schleinitz's court of admirers: "The difference between Pius IX and Leo XIII is as follows," Gobineau had said: "the late Pope conversed animatedly, and often in an absolutely delightful way, but he never asked questions and never listened. His successor asks questions and appears to listen." "My conversation with Gobineau," he continues, "turned upon none but quite indifferent matters, and if I have the honour to see him again, the same thing will happen. Fortunately, for long years past my feelings have become emancipated from all the holy water of courts, even of the court of the Vatican. The holy water of any church whatever entirely suffices for my pious views." We can discern with pleasure the deep affinity which had developed between Wahnfried and the Villa d'Este.

But there were external influences which caused Frau Cosima to be very much taken up during these days by memories of her brother and sister. The Master noticed this and played her and her two elder daughters *Tannhäuser:* " We (Daniela, Boni, and I) wept the hot blessed tears which bring relief. Richard jested about it; but I told him that nothing can ever surpass this work. He replied that Wolfram has the true German character. The Italians and French have too much *chaleur du cœur* (warmth of heart). Today it struck me as particularly beautiful that Wolfram's noble, virile sentiments are concentrated, as it were, into a symbol by his salutation to the Star of Eve. I recalled what it had been like twenty-two years ago and described to the children how I saw the work for the first time! I am delighted and touched at the children's emotion now, and I send out the greeting of remembrance towards a grave. For Blandine was with me at that performance." And they fell to talking about her mother and her bitter experiences, which led on to the subject of their own destiny. It was ten years ago that she had fled to Triebschen! And she said: " My God, I do not know how one survives such things! A kindly destiny must have overruled things. Richard said that he had been in a state of wild anxiety about me, which prompted him to send Claire to me. He asked me to come upstairs and played me the Prelude (to the third act). He showed me how many pages he had used for sketching it out, and for Titurel's funeral. He said that it is not hard to imagine things and be inspired with ideas. ' My difficulty always is,' he said, ' to set any limits to them.' " And she writes of this Prelude: " It has got to be still more sombre (*lichtlos*), like the lamentations of an extinct star — that is, not a lament, but a music suggestive of extinction, against which the lament is then thrown into relief. This is how the beginning sounds, whereupon, as though part and parcel of it, appear Kundry's painful wanderings and her supplication for redemption. It is as though this could not be expressed in song — only the elemental basis of it can be effective, as Richard, indeed, insists."

And so the music of this work struggled forth from his soul amid prodigious efforts; for in his consciously creative process he said to himself at every bar that nothing but the very grandest means of expression would suffice here. And he only succeeded in this because he felt so infinitely happy and at ease in the world in which he lived, in the atmosphere of Wahnfried. For instances, she writes: " As I came from the bath and sat down by his side, he said: ' I was thinking just now that I have only had a sense of home since I have been with you. In earlier days, when I arranged my house and made things nice, as, for instance, at Zürich, I had a bad conscience, as it were, as though nothing were going to last, but everything would break up soon. That shows how insecure a great part of my life was. How much more am I now justified in saying that I have got a home! How lonely it was in Vienna! I went to Sperl with Friederike Maier, to revive the memory of the gay Vienna of 1830. But it was all abominable."

Next came All Souls' Day, and once again the forms of her departed dear ones rose before her. Wagner, too, spoke of Blandine, whose destiny lay in her wonderful marriage. " Yesterday," she writes, " I was thinking how Daniel would have found fresh life with Richard, how for him, too, all trammels would have been removed, and he would have found a source of new life in devotion to Richard." Indeed, scarcely anybody would have been able to exert such an influence on Daniel as the Master, while at the same time Daniel would have had such sensibilities and great qualities to offer him in return. But the Master always succeeded in distracting her from her gloomy thoughts in his own fashion; thus one day when she was sad because her father had not written, he observed: " One thing I can most decidedly say to your father — that I am under a better influence than he is." " On the other hand, he cannot deny that the happiness that springs from being associated with genius consists in seeing it blossom entirely after its own manner, though this does not seem ever to have occurred to many women." "They want to play the part of Beatrice (*beatricisieren*)," she comments, "I mean to play the part of Dante (*dantifizieren*), to be entirely created by him, it is only my ego that he destroys in me. '*Château démoli est à moitié reconstruit* (A castle demolished is half rebuilt).' He considers that I am growing stronger, and regrets that I did not look like this when my father was here. I told him that I was only perfectly well when I was alone with him; then I felt myself purified from the guilt of existence, and that did me good physically as well."

Under the influence of these feelings she wrote Frau Mimi a highly characteristic letter: "There has been a long interval since I received your last letter, beloved Mimi, and as I set to work to write to you, I feel as though I had to trace the outlines of a whole life. How often have my emotional experiences made me think of you! I have constantly talked to you in the voice that finds no words. Indeed, as I sit at my writing-table and try to send you an outward token of this unbroken communion, I am attempting to fix something which always exists in a state of flux and to summon back that which from time to time raises itself forcibly out of the stream. Shall I succeed? I am almost inclined to doubt it. For that which is assumes an ever more dreamlike form to me, and if I have to send out some expression of it into that state of life in which you reign as the sweetest of realities, I now feel, as it were, almost paralysed. I realize how even in this dream it is impressions that predominate, and that what I am giving you today is quite a different image from that which I should have given even the day before; besides, a contemplative existence is not nice and communicative, and at present almost all my life belongs to the sphere of contemplation. If a familiar pain rises up in my heart, my consciousness greets it with the words: 'What, are you there again, still stirring? Are you not quite at rest even now?' And when consciousness, the guilt of existence, awakens, I say: 'Welcome, old guest, we know each other, you have been a staunch friend to me.' Only to Care, the manager of this wondrous household, do I say nothing. She lives for one thing alone, but with regard to that she knows neither rest nor peace, if once she is startled from her repose. But above all this state of affairs, even above the raging of Care, stretches the lofty, protecting heaven of trust in God. And if I wished to characterize this more exactly, I should have to say that to me destiny is God: the destiny that has so mysteriously and wonderfully guided and delivered me. When Care stirs the fire and fans the blaze, I invoke this God, and my supplication in itself brings help, for it is faith and trust, and so during these days I am lifted even above my alarms about the well-being of the Only one. How often, as I go about the daily round of my occupations, do I contemplate our present existence in the light of the memories which the children will have of it later! As in the Dedication to *Faust*, the present vanishes from before my eyes. But it is not the past in which it is lost, it is the future, in which I behold its own glorification, so that its disappearance is merely an enhancement, in which for the first time I really enjoy it to the full. My spirit soars, oblivious of the world, from the symbol to the actual, from the finite to the eternal. You will certainly realize how radiant was our enjoyment here, how it was love that ruled here, and how thought about the world outside brought a momentary discord into a world for which the other world (which we may call the real one) grows ever more spectral. Indeed, my very longing for certain lovely things, such as the sun and flowers, is extinct, and, while listening to the strains of *Parsifal*, I have so often gazed in rapture and gratitude at the grey heaven and the gaunt, leafless trees that even this greyness revealed its soul to me, and I love the poor, friendly things, as I love everything which is calm and allows me to be just one thing (*das Eine zu sein*) — or, better, to exist in One alone. And so you will understand, dearest Mimi, that there is no longer much that can frighten me, and you will forgive me if, when I am, it turns out as strangely as it does now. But I will not continue in this strain; I will tell you what little there is to tell. You can have no doubt, can you, that my children are always a great joy to me? Thanks to the presence of Frau von Staffs in Bayreuth, I have found a whole group of young girls to whom I give lessons on the *Odyssey*, and expound Plutarch, French and German history to the best of my ability; their attentive faces, their eyes full of life, are a real joy to me. I have had the girls to

Wahnfried every week for dancing. Lulu is really a very pleasant ingredient in life, she is witty, energetic, extremely unsnobbish, and absolutely free from envy, in spite of her acute judgment. Besides which, she can look very nice in an original way. Boni and Eva promise to grow up almost beautiful, and Loldi goes beyond mere beauty; she verges on the imposing. Fidi is developing great wit and character (he cannot bear anybody to speak ill of Bayreuth in his presence; he has a reverence for our ' corner [*Winkel*] '). All of them are remarkably good to me; they are a really splendid help to me, and they will not fail to receive a blessing for it. My heart feels this, powerless though I may be ' to exert any external influence (*nach aussen etwas zu bewegen*).'

" We ran through [Turgeniev's] *Terres Vierges* with great interest, and if you do not happen to know it, I should like to recommend it to you as a picture of a movement which is less than nothing in itself, but has a destructive effect on men's characters, and works like an intoxication. One feels as though one had oneself experienced everything in it, which is never the case, for instance, in Balzac's novels, which are poetry as well. But this is reality, sad, dismal reality. One is glad to turn away from it, but one must grant this much to the author, that he has seen and delineated things correctly. I had rather not say much about Busch's book,[1] the impression which it made on me was a desolate one; I had rather say something about what I was last reading, *The Moonrise of Knowledge*, an Indian drama, for it has given me much food for thought. If I could feel the slightest trace of pleasure in putting on the blue stocking, I should draw a parallel between Calderón's *Autos* and this remarkable Indian drama, and I should be glad if one of our collaborators would assume this task, perhaps weaving in Giordano Bruno's dramatized treatises as well and crowning the whole with a discussion of *Parsifal*. But who is to do it? Dohm could have done it and perhaps would have done once upon a time, but now? Would you, perhaps, invite him to do it? It is true that such a work involves plunging into the deepest problems which concern mankind, and an untrammelled scaling of the sublimest heights from which one can follow the poet; and these are not easy to find in our 'Buschy' days.

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[1] J. H. M. Busch, *Bismarck und seine Leute* (1878).—Tr.

"And so our good Wolzogen will be left rather isolated. He has now moved into our neighbourhood; his mother-in-law has bought the house and is occupying the lower storey, while he and his wife have the upper one. A gate with a grille gives access to Wahnfried, and so we form the oddest colony, we being, if you will, the Robinson Crusoe family, and he the Friday family. I cannot even now understand how he persuaded his mother-in-law, the General's widow, to undertake this move; and it shows me once again what enthusiasm is capable of doing. The next number of the *Blätter* will give you pleasure,[1] for one may be permitted to rejoice in appearing to be the sole exception when the Norn is still putting us in such a sad frame of mind.

"I am sure you will be glad, on my father's account, too, at the article '*Das Publikum in Zeit und Raum* (The Public in Time and Space).'[2] It was a pleasure to me to hear such a good account from you of the performances in Leipzig; I have just heard from one of those who took part in them that they were far better than those in Vienna. I am also very grateful to you for your account of the evening concert [Bülow's] with a program of five sonatas. It really seemed like tempting Providence, and yet they say it has been a success everywhere. So *Parsifal* is 'a speciality'—happier he who can say so than he to whom the *Nibelungen* means nothing. I am giving my husband Gobineau's work on Persia as a Christmas present.

"I could not help laughing heartily at the wine-stain which made you the possessor of the *Phänomenologie*. How many of our ladies would have accepted the offer of the loan with gratitude! But I am afraid that you and I cannot rise to the level of our times." She went on to speak of a recent wedding among their friends and made the following remarks apropos of the lady's goodness of heart: "Kindness means eternal youth; it alone goes hand in hand with intellect on equal terms. Beauty, wit, energy, none of these can stand by the side of genius. But goodness can do so, and it is as rare as genius. Nor can it even be stupid, because it refuses to be crafty, and everything must strike its sails to real goodness. How beautifully Goethe felt that when he made Götz say so simply: '*Wen Gott liebt, dem gibt er ein gutes Weib* (Whom God loves, to him He grants a good wife).' What a treasure of fidelity, trustworthiness, self-sacrifice, and love does he cause one to divine in this word, for he recognizes in it the love of God! . . .

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[1] *Bayreuther Blätter* for December 1878 contained a "*Rückblick* (Retrospect)" of the festival of 1876, in which a high tribute was paid to Frau von Schleinitz.—Tr.

[2] Ibid., October 1878. This article eulogizes Liszt's work.—Tr.

" But I am talking to you as if you were one of my school-children, whose attention I draw to some detail or another from time to time, and I am beginning to preach. But you will not take anything amiss and will imagine my life as I have tried to picture it to you, and so excuse anything exaggerated that there may be in these lines.

" I have had a hard time of it this month, for my husband has had to endure a few sleepless nights as a result of his strenuous work. I found help in the way of which I told you; when this anguished sympathy is stilled, I am frightened of my own happiness. Or, rather, I am crushed beneath the heavenly oppression of this sentiment. The thought of how I am to make myself worthy of it becomes almost torturing to me, and I would gladly face death for him who has given his life into my keeping. I remember how, as a young girl, when I was reading of the heroic deeds of the Greeks with the enthusiasm that belongs to youth, I counted that man happiest who died in bringing the news to his native city that it had been saved by victory. The same feeling still persists in me. Yet my kindly and glorious destiny will have it that I should live to see the Genius shedding his radiance more and more victoriously. And so I must wear my happiness like the maid of low degree who came to wear the royal mantle, and see how it fares with me. But language will no longer obey me properly, and when I get outside the ordinary smooth routine of my activities and the meditation which accompanies it, you see what exaggerated stuff I at once produce. But on entering upon the solemn feast-days I felt impelled to send you a ray of love from my sacred inner being if I could manage to do so. I hope you will read these lines at a quiet moment, when their sense may become clear to you in spite of the words. And, finally, I sum up in an embrace the sentiments which inspired me with these lines to you, dear! "

The last few months had indeed brought Frau Cosima days of care. In addition to overwork and sleeplessness, there had also been certain accessory symptoms which had manifested themselves in a spasmodic form, causing the Master trying hours, in spite of his exceptional physical vitality. But now the full magic of her nature was revealed, and she often stilled the spasms by the touch of her hand. It is no wonder that in his hours of happy creation he said to her: " You make me an optimist " — to which she replied modestly: " You are the only man capable of happiness, for you depend on nothing that is vain." And as though they would vie with each other in the consciousness of their happiness, she could not but say of his words: " How was I to give back the soul which he set ablaze with these darting flames? "

And so Christmas came round and was celebrated as beautifully as ever, though it was already full of mysterious preparations for the birthday of the Lady of Wahnfried. When she awoke on the morning of the 25th, she meditated upon how, for a whole year, she had been living in Wahnfried, over which now reigned that magic spell which emanated from her and the Master, who was so sensitive to all love and understanding. " The magic of Wahnfried " — these are her own words, and we should look at the whole celebration which the Master arranged for his wife in this spirit. Without letting her suspect anything, he had sent for the Meiningen orchestra in absolute secrecy, so that the day was celebrated with such beautiful music that no prince could have had better. The presentation of his gifts at her bedside in the early morning had in itself a really touching charm. Like a young lover he had the many beautiful dresses spread out before her which he had himself chosen with fine taste, each dress complete, with shoes to match. In short, here we see him like some young cavalier of the rococo period, and the only dress which was not inspired by this spirit was the " Swan dress (*Schwankleid*)," to which he attached a special value, and which she only wore on state occasions. Still less rococo were the strains which now rose from the hall, for, besides the Beethoven

Festival Overture with Fugue (*Zur Weihe des Hauses*) and many other things — also described in detail by Glasenapp — the program included the Prelude, which not only was revealed to her in all its grandeur and holiness now that it was orchestrated, but showed her that here again the Master had discovered a new path in his artistic creation. She was infinitely happy and grateful, and not only was she touched by the love of this unique man, in whom was to be found a certain grandeur and true princeliness of nature, but the way in which the population of Bayreuth assembled at Wahnfried in the evening and did homage to her made her realize, too, how thoroughly she had become identified with them all.

It was at this time that she once more turned to a book which had the deepest fascination for her, and which he too was reading again with singular interest, since he had to carry on its arguments in his articles: this was *Oper und Drama* (*Opera and Drama*), which she considered quite unique in its kind. She was very much alive to its character, for it was not written merely for the writing's sake, but forged like a sword to be borne in battle, a sword which never failed him in any of his many conflicts. When she enthusiastically told him her opinion — that it was unique in its kind — he said with a smile that it had, at any rate, one reader. But to her it was like a revelation to the people, the State, the world, and the theatre, and she was entirely in agreement with him in his idea that German life had suffered inexpressibly from the fact that the Jews had made their way into it too early, when it was not firmly enough consolidated to bear this invasion. In connexion with this book they once more came to speak of Zürich and what had happened there, and there is a charm of its own in hearing how he talked about this to his wife — especially about the struggle between Frau Minna and Frau Mathilde, and how each tried to annoy the other and angered and irritated her — "while I — I was thinking of neither of them." These subjects were suggested to them even more particularly by Gottfried Keller's *Züricher Novellen,* which had been brought them as a Christmas present by none other than Levi, the Hofkapellmeister at Munich, and so revived their old literary connexions with the Zürich in which Herwegh had played a fleeting role and Gottfried Keller an immortal one. They now read these stories together, and Wagner found endless pleasure in them, while to her, too, their true nature was apparent. *Ursula* and *Hadlaub* made a deep impression upon them, and *Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten* carried her back to Zürich, in spite of a certain repugnance which she felt for the thoroughly Swiss character depicted in the book. And they now went back to an even earlier period in the Master's life; for it was just now that he received *Das Liebesverbot* (*The Ban on Love*) and played her the overture, upon which she remarked that that of *Die Feen* (*The Fairies*) pleased her better; whereas he considered that the former was more a work of genius. But to be thus introduced and initiated into all his works enabled her really to grasp the whole of her beloved husband's life — for it was she who had done most towards having them all collected and given a permanent abiding-place at Wahnfried. They also spoke of the remarkable variety and cleverness of the musical form, which, in spite of all influences, was constantly revealing the individual qualities of the young artist. And by way of contrast with the music which was already being produced, even in those days, he was led on to talk of how his master, Weinlig, had said to him that dissonances were dubious expedients, for either they sounded bad, or else they were simply not heard; from which he had drawn the conclusion that he simply would not write any, for he would have risked their sounding bad, but if they were not to be heard, then they were to be avoided.

By January she was already thinking how to celebrate his birthday and could think of nothing better than a portrait of herself. She made arrangements with Lenbach, and the question now was how to find an opportunity of getting away from Wahnfried without its being too noticeable and without putting him out too much. She succeeded in doing this, the children's dentist having to serve as pretext. Lenbach finished the portrait in a few sittings, but during her absence the Master felt very lonely and wandered about the house looking for her, until she suddenly appeared, sooner than he had hoped, at which he was naturally unspeakably happy; and it was just such emotional disturbances as these, which almost caused a clash between them, that also stimulated his creative power. Thus once he suddenly rose from the dinner-table because the grand sequence of harmonies accompanying the bells, which afterwards aroused such admiration in Liszt, had just occurred to him and he had to fix it immediately. Yet during these days his mind was busy with other plans — among others, for revising *The Flying Dutchman*, upon which she raised a formal protest: " It hurts me when anyone gives the preference to one of his works over the others. A quality of nobility and grandeur runs through them all, and every one of them is unique and incomparable." Thus this plan was not carried out on the large scale which he had had in view.

As for Frau Cosima, she lived in a world all her own, with strangely exalted sensibilities. The existence that she led was on an absolutely mystical plane and prompted her to such utterances as the following: " My emotion is such that I can find no name for it. Would that I might take him in my arms and bear him heavenward, serene and free from all suffering. It seems to me as though this were my function." Just at this time, too, she had been in particularly close touch with her friend Luise Voss. Not that Marie von Schleinitz and Malwida would not have understood her states of mind too, but this warm-hearted creature invited such confidences even more than they did, so that she wrote to her: " I cannot help feeling almost sad to think that silence hardly ever has a pleasant cause, and that one is right in being anxious about those who are silent! What you tell me, dearest Luise, is so strikingly in harmony with much that I have experienced in my own circle that I might almost take it as typical of the present time, in which what still subsists seems ghostly, yet at the same time cannot be replaced: ' *Dämmert der Tag, oder leuchtet die Lohe?* (*Dawneth the day, or flickers the fire there?*) '[1] as the Norn asks.

" In obedience to your directions I have read the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel and again received a deeply affecting impression from it. In speaking of the wisdom of the children of this world I do not think our Saviour is referring to the intellect, but He means that they understand their interests better than the children of light do theirs, when they still neglect to make themselves friends in heaven. The passage: 'That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God' caused me to meditate deeply. Chance would have it that I had just then been reading a few fragments of Plutarch, and Xenophon, too, which had called up the antique world before me in all its vital beauty; I was still feeling the powerful and almost intoxicating effects of this, which were still further strengthened by the sight of a head of Hermes which has just been dug up at Olympia (by our friend Curtius, whom you remember in connexion with Helbig), so that this passage of Scripture haunted my mind, and just as in *Tannhäuser* Venus and her spells vanish at the invocation of the Virgin, so what is merely beautiful and glorious pales before what is sublime. And as I continued to meditate and again summoned up my impressions of the Beautiful, I said to myself: 'I can allow my mind to entertain both these two currents of human thought by dint of viewing the one as an affirmation of the will to live of the Greek world, and the other as a unification of Christendom — indeed, up to a certain point, I can unite them in the sphere of my own soul. But I cannot reconcile myself with our world, unlovely and unchristian as it is, and false down to its smallest fibre. In its quality of a supreme revelation Christianity destroyed the world, and with it the Beautiful as well. Humanity attempted to reconcile the world with Christianity, and the result is our life of today. But the fact that art, which is my life, is entirely cut off from this state of affairs, and that the Beautiful and the Sublime may alike be found in it — this is the benediction which refreshes me like dew and lends my soul the wings upon which it can soar high above all that troubles me. But I am less and less able to understand having any dealings with the world, and it seems to me that, once one grants it the slightest admittance, all is over with the magic of genius and love, whose name is oblivion!'

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[1] *Twilight of the Gods*, I, i.—Tr.

"I had written these words and was asking myself where to send them when I was cheered by your kind greetings from Gross-Giewitz. Sorry though I am that you have to miss your visit to Florence, of which I had been so glad for your sake, yet you seem nearer to me in your northern abode, not only as regards milage, but intellectually and spiritually! It is as though the thread of our thoughts were spinning itself without a break between my solitude and yours, and we were receiving similar impressions. It is extraordinary how all longing for the outer world can become entirely blunted in one, how one can look with exactly the same enthusiasm at a grey sky and at a blue one, at the earth when snow-bound and when blooming the flowers. I now see them all only through the medium of the music which fills me with rapture; and do not take exception to this as paradoxical, for in the realm of music the face of things really does change; either everything fades away before one, and every gleam is extinguished, or else a strange ghostly animation makes its appearance, as though things animate and inanimate were telling one their secret, and I exist in music even in those moments when it is not audible around me. For it never ceases to sound and echo in my heart.

" We shall not be going to Italy this year. But for next winter we have chosen Naples. My husband stands in great need of southern air, and so do I, both for him and for myself. Next January we mean to go straight from the Rennweg [in Bayreuth] to Posilippo and are already inquiring about accommodation. Malwida will probably spend some time with us there; she is very pleased with her winter in Rome; she has seen a great deal of Madame Minghetti, besides Frau Helbig, the Princess Ourousoff, a Hindu, a Maronite bishop — in short, the whole pleasant cosmopolitan world that one finds nowhere but in the wonderful city. I have also had good news from Mimi. She seems absolutely contented with her domestic existence, and I think that age will throw her remarkable gifts into greater and greater relief. Frau von Wöhrmann is staying in Naumburg, so far as I know, but I incline to doubt whether she is in a more contented state of mind. I see quite a fair amount of the Staffs here, the intercourse between the children in particular being very lively; they are very dear and valued neighbours to me on the children's account. How much I should like to introduce my Daniela to you, beloved Luise! I really believe you would be pleased with her. She is very sweet, pleasing, witty, and decided in character. She is not at all regularly pretty, but her face is interesting, and one likes looking at it. Boni is becoming regularly pretty, my husband calls her Dorothea, she is self-contained, quiet, rather proud, reserved, but good as well. All five of them are a constant joy to me, and I really hope that, fundamentally different though their natures are from mine, it will none the less be possible for me to bring what is good in them to full fruition. This is all education can do, after all. Boni is now sixteen and bored with her governess, but I cannot let her do without one, on her walks at least. All her other occupations I myself share. The eldest, who is eighteen and a half, reads with me, sees to the books, has been with Frau von Staff to four balls and a few parties of very varied kinds, and seems to be altogether content with her life. Siegfried goes in for planning towns and makes jokes! There you have my life, beloved Luise, which is very simple and consists of nothing but meditation and care. Receive my heart-felt greetings, and may I trust that worry and dread will remain far from you? "

Meanwhile the orchestral sketch of the third act progressed rapidly and flourishingly, and she took the deepest interest in the " Laughing Mead (*Lachende Aue*)," while the second entry into the Temple of the Grail drew from her a whole series of observations. It is interesting that at this time, in contrast with the rules afterwards laid down by the management, she herself proposed that Titurel's bier should be placed, not in the foreground, but at the back, in the choir, from which his voice was heard in the first act, and the Master was entirely in agreement with this idea. Easter came round, and she notes how she went to communion with the children, about which she writes: " With my mind full of Richard's music, I went with the children to communion. A merry Eastertide party followed, the Easter hare paid us a visit, and three birthdays were celebrated at one and the same time."

But he was advancing slowly towards the end of his work — " all for love of you," as he said. " No God would have induced me to proceed with the instrumentation of *Parsifal.*" And now on April 25 a terrible blow descended upon their neighbours: the Baron von Staff met with an accident while out shooting. Frau Cosima now befriended his widow in the most touching way. It is moving to read with what sympathy, but also with what spiritual power, she succeeded in comforting the unfortunate woman, while preventing the shadow of mourning from falling upon Wahnfried, where on April 26 it was possible to celebrate the completion of *Parsifal*. The Master drew a deep breath of relief and was happy, but it was like an utterance of genius losing itself in remote distances of the intellect when he spoke of the instrumentation, saying that it must be absolutely different from that of the other works: it must be " like cloud-formations, which separate and then unite again." He spoke with touching simplicity of this work, and especially of its conclusion, as well as of the simplicity which is to be found in the whole cast of Amfortas's character. She was greatly struck by this idea and said to him that perhaps the divine simplicity of the work was only comparable to that of the Gospels — the " stainless fool (*reine Tor*) " dominates everything. The Master only nodded and said: " It is all direct." She was steeped in infinite gratitude because the work had really reached its completion, and was in absolute transports of piety and devotional feeling. Outside, the winter might rage its fill; he only remarked, on recalling Triebschen, that they ought to have preserved that idyllic existence.

About this time she received a letter from her father which once again reminded her of the remotest past: " Only see, I am here at Klausenburg, my dearest daughter! I have come on a visit to an old friend, Count Alexander Teleki, in company with a young friend, Count Geja Zichy. In the year 1841 Teleki wanted me to go and study in Berlin. But the next thing that happened was that he received a sabre wound in a duel which he fought on my account, and also wounded his opponent. He subsequently went travelling through Spain and Portugal with Felix Lichnowsky, and in the year '43 went with me to Warsaw, Petersburg, and Moscow. On the way back I introduced him to your mother at Nonnenwerth. In the year '46 he and I lounged away two months in Klausenburg and Bucharest. In the years '48 and '49 he served under the command of General G., rose to the rank of colonel, and was almost hanged at Arad. But he turned up again in Italy, safe and sound, in the service of Garibaldi — and so on and so forth. Geja Zichy is a poet and one of the most gifted of musicians. The loss of his right arm has redounded to his fame, for nobody plays the piano with the left hand as he does. For the last two years we have met regularly in Budapest, and I am going to invite him to come to Bayreuth this summer while I am there."

This gives us a picture of the Abbé Liszt as he was in the years of his "pilgrimage" with Frau Cosima's beautiful mother. "May our next meeting be soon. On Thursday, April 10, I shall have the joy of embracing both grown-ups and children at Wahnfried. Yours, Franz Liszt." But this did not come to pass, and on April 12 he wrote a letter of excuse from Hanover: "I should have liked to spend Easter with you, my beloved daughter, but must postpone my festivities at Wahnfried. . . . Hans has sent me an invitation, through Bronsart, to his concert in Hanover tomorrow, where the choruses from *Prometheus* and the Ninth Symphony are to be heard, and *Cellini* [Berlioz] and *A Life for the Tsar* [Glinka] are billed for Tuesday and Thursday. I have not yet seen Hans in his capacity as conductor at Hanover, but this seemed to me a favourable opportunity for doing so, and I reached here at two o'clock this morning. To the great annoyance of Spiridion,[1] who is asleep at this moment, I have taken a room for a few hours at the Hotel Rudolf, so as not to disturb the sleep of the Bronsarts, with whom I am to spend this week, according to my old custom.

"Sakuntala is the name which either Count Apponyi or Michalovich has thought of for Marie Dönhoff. I am adopting it and shall call her by it when I write about her. She wrote to you yesterday about the concert at Andrássy's and the performance of the *Graner Messe* at Vienna, where for the first time this work of somewhat ancient date met with a consummate and finished performance. This is my revenge for the one in Paris in the year '60, the failure of which was, I flatter myself, a consequence of my having been connected in Paris with my one and only master, Wagner, whom I had the good fortune to follow, as it were, in the disfavour with which I afterwards met from Dame Critique in the newspapers.

"In speaking to Adelheid Schorn the Princess Wittgenstein blamed me for having chosen a false ideal. But my ideal is a perfectly sincere one, and it is a very real ideal of mine to see you again as soon and for as long a time as possible."

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[1] Liszt's valet.—Tr.

And so time passed by, and Frau Cosima started her new diary on May 1 with the words: "I start my diaries more and more frequently. Volumes which in past times lasted for years, now scarcely last for six months. At the same time I feel as though there were less and less of myself present in them. Shall I succeed, my children, in fixing the image which it is my desire to preserve for you? I do not know whether our love will live on in you, yet I go on."

And it was not only her diary that she had to carry on now, but also the biography, which had had to be dropped almost entirely since the days at Triebschen. And she now put the question whether it was to be continued as truthfully as before. He answered with a decided affirmative, and, comparing his biography with [Goethe's] *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (*Poetry and Truth from my own Life*), he said that in every fine book it was the truth that enriched the poetry, and, conversely, the poetry that enriched the truth. But she had all sorts of work to do; above all, she had to conceal from him the preparations for May 22, which was made more difficult because a number of visitors announced that they would arrive for it. About this time she read Helene Dönniges's reminiscences of Lassalle, which depicted with unreserved frankness both what had happened and their feelings. She discussed it with him, and he said that it was just another case of Frau von Kalb. Such a thing was, in a sense, utterly alien to her; and as she was now setting her old letters in order, she wrote: "I am arranging my letters and once more read with emotion two from him to me, one of November '64, one of the year 1867, and one of the year '72 from Bayreuth. All our struggles, sorrows, and joys rise up before me, evoked by his dear writing." Thus it was understandable that she should have talked over the past with him: "Going back over all life's irrational happenings, I entertain him by telling him what so often comes to my ears. Like Figaro, I keep silence about other things, or about the many things of which I have said nothing to him." He was sensitive to all impressions: whether she appeared in the beautiful dress which he had given her on that "sacred (*weihevoll*)" birthday, or whether he applauded her every morning when she came to the breakfast-table fresh from her bath. One day he did not applaud and said, almost with a blush, that he had thought it might hurt her. There was something infinitely touching about him, and, in spite of all her work, she once again felt impelled about this time to express her feelings to Frau Luise. Writing on May 9, her poor brother's birthday, she says: "I have had your letter by me, my beloved Luise, for more than a month and have thanked you for it every day, and today I at last venture to answer it, though with a feeling of apprehension, lest I may not be allowed to do so. It is not easy to gain a few hours' peace even in the quietest, most retired life, and I wanted to be able to concentrate my thoughts well in order to write to you. How kind it was of you to write to me about your expedition to Berlin! How touched I was to hear, from you of all people, that all my dear friends remembered me so kindly; my life is so remote from it all, as though, in the thoughts of my friends, I already enjoyed the beautiful privileges of the departed, whose weaknesses one forgets and upon whose peace one sheds a blessing by one's partiality in stressing and throwing into relief what is humanly good in them! Your love, dearest, seemed to me to dispel any superhuman glory attaching to this agreeable state, and so, in reading your letter, I enjoy, as it were, one of the joys of immortality. I saw Mimi's room in a most charming light, with her amiable self radiant in it and the other dear ones too; but you, dear Luise, I saw with me here.

"During the last few days you will have received the notice of Georg Staff's death. It happened suddenly, while he was out shooting, and his wife, who is in a pitiable state, heard the news in the most cruel fashion. For the last fortnight I have been very much taken up with this sad event, happening so very near to us. The poor children steal across to us, looking like distraught spirits in their black clothes, and the many things which every living creature has cause to weep, and which usually rest as gently in me as the happy dead, rose up before me once more in this sorrowful form, and I wept almost incessantly over herself and over us all, in company with the poor widow. Shortly before this I had helped her through a dangerous disease from which one of the Staff children was suffering, and hailed it as a miracle when the child survived. And if I glance across from this deeply suffering house to mine, where genius is creating with unruffled serenity, and young lives are blooming and laughing, I look into my own heart in strange meditation. Sorrow and joy, happiness and misery — I contemplate them and I experience them at the same time, like two different streams of life flowing simultaneously from the same temporal spring! Have we another life after this one? I do not know. It never occurs to me to ask the question, for I have been conscious of eternity and enjoyed it here. When any evil feeling creeps into me — discontent at this or that burden that I have to bear — I am soon able to say to it: 'You are evil, which belongs to the temporal order, and if I cannot vanquish you altogether, I will at any rate hate you so utterly that you will feel as uncomfortable with me as I do with you.' The Arabs say that in every soul there is a dark spot, which has power to obscure the whole soul. I think we can find this point, work to prevent any extension of it, and set limits to it, and if it has spread, we may also lament this and expiate it, and if we have had honest intentions (and made honest efforts), the angel of peace comes and lulls our poor thoughts to sleep. The manifestations of art are in themselves a happiness to me, and so is any sacrifice made with the whole heart; these already constitute eternal life. Death affects nothing but what is temporal. And my imagination can conceive nothing greater than one has experienced here below: the adoration of the cross, the ecstasy of love, the rays of the setting sun, the music of exultation and lament — the birth of a son — what further joys can we demand? These joys are broken and mixed, and we see all things suffer; but truth lies in suffering, and death comes, as it were, in compensation for it, just as it does in compensation for change. But I do not want to deny or contradict anything, only to say how I see existence and to think no more about it.

" Malwida has just brought out a book under the title *Stim-*

mungsbilder (*Varying Moods*), and I think there are things in it that will fascinate you. I am promising myself to write to her about it. This is not very easy for — I cannot explain it either to her or to myself — but there are things which I cannot controvert, yet which I had rather had been left unsaid. I also consider it a great mistake to lay claim to any position for women other than that which they have hitherto occupied, and I had rather see the abolition of parliaments in their present form than have women taking part in them. Before reading this book I had read Frau von Kalb's *Gedenkblätter* (*Reminiscences*). If this is not already in your hands, I cordially recommend it to you; there are absolutely wonderful thoughts to be found in it, and much that I might call an intoxication of emotion, powerful, but without a definite purpose, and musical as the soughing of wind through the forest, but melancholy as well; her love for Schiller is like Schiller's own genius, and when she destroys the great man's letters, one experiences a feeling of painful exaltation, as at a destruction of the transitory and the blazing up of eternity like a flame.

"You ask me to forgive you for telling me your thoughts. What ought not I to do, then, for pronouncing myself in the obscurest terms on the subject of what cannot be expressed? Do be very, very indulgent.

"Now I will leave you and go across to my poor neighbour. I remember what an impression it made upon me when I heard the words in *Wallenstein: 'Sie hat den Mann verloren, den sie liebt* (She has lost the man whom she loves).' Expressed in this bare way and spoken by that stern man, sorrow appeared in all its nakedness. And what more can be said?

"I have just taken my children round the Sistine Chapel in Braun's beautiful photographs! Is not this the last word in painting? A whole world, and one that is closed behind us. You see, my eyes are now turned only towards what is closed, completed, and eternal. The processes of becoming and ceasing to be pass before us, it is as though they were powerless to affect the heart, and youth and age seem to me like garments which I have changed, one that I have put off and the other that I have put on." She had also shown Malwida's book to the

Master, but he declined to read it, saying: "I only read women's books when they are by you."

And now came May 22, for which, as in former years, she had arranged a delightful celebration. A number of visitors had appeared. Besides Frau von Schleinitz there were Prince Liechtenstein and Frau von Wöhrmann, and a most particularly welcome guest was Lenbach, who had painted the portrait of Frau Cosima which was now to present the beloved woman to the Master once again in quite a different guise from before.

Her own account of it is as follows: "The day of days, and today, too, it is Ascension Day, with pealing bells and glorious weather. We arranged the booths; everything had come but the sketches for *Parsifal.* At ten o'clock I was able to fetch Richard, and he was greeted by the pilgrim. It all went off well, Fidi was unspeakably touching in front of my picture, he was pretending to be painting it, dressed like Father Geyer and with his hair arranged in the same way as his. We gazed at each other as though in a dream. Thanks be to you, my children. Everything was so fortunate as to please Richard, from the portrait to the glasses. After he had gone, one of the Moorish dishes fell down and broke. Klingsor's glory, farewell! I received the guests who had come to congratulate him, and we then walked in the Hofgarten, where extracts from Richard's works were played. At dinner Fidi proposed cheers for his father, Richard was delighted with the children's song to 'the Beloved'[1] and told me he had found the right conclusion for it, for he had not slept. After dinner he made the children strike up their song and joined in at the words: '*Wer ein holdes Weib errungen, stimm' in unseren Jubel ein* (He who has won a gracious wife, let him join our hymn of joy)' and '*Retterin, Retterin* (Deliverer, deliverer)' (from *Fidelio*). How gladly could I pass away! . . ." She indeed understood how to delight the Master in her own wonderful way. The living pictures which were represented aroused his deepest emotion, and he was enchanted at the grace of his daughters. Then on the morning of the 23rd the first and second acts of *Parsifal* were played to the guests, and on the 24th came the third act too, after which the Countess Mimi took her leave, profoundly affected by *Parsifal.*

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[1] Glasenapp, II, 98–9. *Gesang der Getreuen an Friedrich August den Geliebten* (Frederick Augustus I of Saxony).—Tr.

And now they were alone once more. Not till then did he begin to " talk about the wonderful play, and the children's dance. When Columbine (Lusch) had appeared, he remarked, he had said to himself: ' Ah, now it is getting pretty.' Then he said how pleased he was at our arrangement of the rooms." He was delighted with everything; but most moving of all was the effect produced upon him by her portrait. This had been a strenuous time for her, but she was immeasurably repaid by the real pleasure that he took in everything. The man who enjoyed such high renown in the world found fresh life in these simple festivities arranged for him by his wife's affection.

A few days later arrived the new number of the *Bayreuther Blätter* with his fine article,[1] " in which, he said, he felt it deeply that he had not mentioned me." And she adds: " How am I to tell him that my whole happiness consists in being lost in him? " For, as a matter of fact, most of the articles which he wrote for the *Bayreuther Blätter* were talked over with her so thoroughly, and she gave him so many wonderful suggestions for them, that he was quite right in saying that he ought to mention her. But, at any rate, new joy and a fresh atmosphere were again introduced into Wahnfried, and he felt infinitely happy in this narrow and intimate circle and found it unspeakably painful to have to leave it. He even found it hard to write his letter of thanks to the King and told her frankly that letters of that sort were always rather paralysing. He felt, he said, that he was not being sincere, and then one had to deceive oneself afterwards in the attempt to convince oneself that it was sincere after all. " I have not yet fought my way into the open, magic still dogs my footsteps." But she understood him and knew that it was only out of a feeling of the deepest and most heart-felt gratitude that he continued to use the tone out of which he had grown long since, and which had only been suited to the King when he was a young man, while now he had fallen into quite different hands and had quite different ideas.

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[1] *Bayreuther Blätter* for May 1879 contained Wagner's article "*Wollen wir hoffen?*"—Tr.

But the days which she was now living were real May days: " Everything that met the eye was verdant and blooming," she writes of a walk which she took with him. " We were at one. In exuberant mood we recalled the *Patronatverein.* ' What will come of it? ' laughed Richard. Then we went up to his room, he was pleased with it and thanked me for having understood his suggestions and lent them my support; they are a sign, he said, that he is in a mood of exuberance; a sort of instinct impels him to them. ' I alone may follow you here,' was my reply. The evening followed, no less merry than the day. We talked about masks, in connexion with our paper. Richard has seen Columbine, Harlequin, and the rest, which had died out, he said, even in Italy. He also recalled the children's salutation. And so the memories of the birthday party still echo in him."

Next arrived a letter from Liszt, which gave Wagner a peculiar pleasure, for he wrote: " I do nothing but dream of you, my beloved daughter, and suffer at being so far away. Two months must yet go by before we meet again. During the last few weeks I have been in communion with you in your celebration at Wahnfried by means of the wonderful *Missa solennis,* which was performed in the same church as that in which you heard my oratorio *Christus.* On Saturday and Sunday I went to the theatre to hear *The Rhinegold* and *The Valkyrie.* In spite of the inevitable defects of the performance, I was overcome with emotion. There are moments when I thank God for my existence. Wagner has caused me to experience such moments with more force than any of the great geniuses who are his brethren. Apropos of *The Valkyrie* I must tell you a little detail about the court. M. Sach cuts himself off from the theatre more and more every year and only enters it on exceptional occasions. On attending the performance of *The Valkyrie* for the first time, he had ordered his carriage for the close of the first act. But the carriage was dismissed, and M. Sach stayed till the end. Our most honoured friends Frau von Schleinitz and Frau von Wöhrmann went to Bayreuth for May 22. Will Rudi Liechtenstein be consoled by his second marriage and scale Parnassus with his compositions? Frau von Schleinitz assures me that he will, and I gladly acquiesce in her opinion. For the rest, Michalovich has received official notice from Count Platen that his opera will be produced in Dresden next winter. The composer told me that he would prefer a positive fiasco to waiting in uncertainty for a performance that has been postponed. For my part, I no longer believe in these successes of serious operas, and this general anxiety to write them seems to me only a transient phase. When once one has heard the *Nibelungen,* one ought to know that only one course is open — a prudent silence. We may pass over the operettas and *opéras bouffes* of Offenbach, Lecocq, and Suppé, which have or have not their own justification for existing! But serious efforts can produce nothing but what is well known — only too well known. Hans is going to render me the service of conducting the first concert at the Wiesbaden Musical Festival. Shortly afterwards he is to give several concerts in England. M. Thiers once remarked that the republic is the form of government which produces the fewest dissensions in France. England offers a similar success to Hans. His personal genius is more justly appreciated there than anywhere else. For the rest, he has made progress in Hanover. Under his directorship the orchestra, the chorus, and all the musicians employed have increased twofold and threefold in merit. After Wiesbaden I shall return here in the middle of June and stay till the end of July. Frau von Meyendorff continues to find fault with my nomad existence, which is equally criticized in Rome. I must bow to these criticisms, without in any way inquiring whether they are more or less justified. Though I may be fit for nothing save to commit follies, these reprimands from both quarters, of whose tendencies I am aware, in no way help me to make reparation for them, especially with regard to your birth, my beloved daughter. What luxury to imagine oneself to be wise because one turns one's back upon others' follies instead of one's own! Penitential garments and penitential exercises might undoubtedly be beneficial to everybody, but one ought not to expect them of one's fellow-men."

We see from this letter how lonely he was everywhere, and how, when he was with the Princess, Frau von Meyendorff, and even Hans, he was longing to be with Cosima and her husband. So it was no wonder that this letter delighted the Master; he felt more and more what an attraction Bayreuth had for Liszt, and how much more at home he was there than in Rome, Pest, or Weimar. Indeed, nowhere could he have seen a more beautiful picture of family life than was displayed at Wahnfried. Wagner himself found new life in his children, and when he approached little Loldi, she reminded him of an ideal sister, so he said, though at other times he said that she was a little Cosima.

Next Ludwig Schemann arrived on a visit and proved a loyal friend, though he occasioned a comment on the part of the Master upon the limited culture and experience of his young friends. The conversations started by the Master aroused a certain academic antagonism in these young people, which was repugnant to Frau Cosima and caused her to intervene characteristically in the conversation. Just at that time they were both particularly interested in Carlyle, of whom Schemann showed no appreciation. Frau Cosima now writes apropos of a discussion about Julius Cæsar and Mommsen's view of him: " I said that the poets had always been law in my eyes; that Dante would not allow me to regard Cato as a fool, while Shakspere revealed to me the theatrical element in Cæsar, which seemed to me to have come into the world with him." The Master felt himself roused, but at the same time repelled, by the opinions expressed by visitors from the outer world, and as soon as he was alone with her, he remarked: " I felt just now as if I was back again in Putbus, except that the house had become so different." On the next morning she was led to speak of the " trials " which they had both endured: " My secret visit to him in Munich with Eva; my journey to the south of France with my father, almost the hardest trial I ever went through." And Richard said: " Believe me, if you had told me you loved another, I should have held my peace. I should have suffered, but in silence."

There was no getting away from it: their troubled past continued to cast a shadow over the present, and so often as they talked of it, some new idea would find expression in connexion with their lives and destinies, and his work as well. But her view of everything was coloured by the idea of living for him alone. For instance, when she read him a circular drawn up by Wolzogen for issuing to the patrons, containing an announcement that *Parsifal* would be performed during the next year, and an appeal for contributions towards the projected school, he stated his unqualified opposition to this. Here he was, he said; if they would meet him on his own ground, he would not fail them. But he could not commit himself or bid for support. Fresh from this incident, they started out on a drive to the Fantaisie, during which the Master was still rather irritable at various casual occurrences; but her comment is: "The only feeling by which I am swayed is that I am to blame if everything is not such as to redound to his good. Affliction, my sense of impotence, the overwhelming joy of love's longing, I leave it all to my star, that it may govern all things and punish me thoroughly when I have been wrong, or deny me my reward when I have been competent, so long as my star still shines upon me. How deeply my spirit perceives it! It is my deep desire, my goodly longing, that I may gaze at my star in the obscure heaven, from which it may shine upon me and console me when the heaving heart swells dark and tempestuous above the depths from which it rose — anon its light is broken by the heart's wild beating, but only at times and for brief moments. My cry of kinship goes out to it from the depths: may I be as good as my destiny has been!"

It was no easy existence that she led, filled though it was with boundless happiness, as when Fidi's birthday was gaily celebrated, and, by way of a wonderful close to it, he talked to her in the evening about *Lohengrin* and of how he had given in it a finished picture of the Middle Ages. "I added that *Lohengrin* is a unique monument of the Middle Ages." The fact that it was Fidi's birthday had produced a very tender mood in him. He was thinking of *Parsifal* and of how he meant to set to work on the instrumentation of it with boundless leisure and delight; and he next told her how he had said to himself: "But you ought to do everything with Cosima." "But then," she adds, "he thought how we should wear ourselves out and melt into tears and become lost in each other, so that it was better for each of us to have his own circle and then come together again afterwards; though he was constantly thinking of me and addressing me. A little later, when he had arranged a few matters in his room and we had taken a walk in the garden, he reverted to this theme and said: ' When I have wanted to tell you everything at once, I have said to myself that it would be better to do so after thinking it over. Everything is so exclamatory (*exklamativ*) at first, the account one would give later would be a deeper one." And so they spent days of infinite happiness, and their conversations were of an enchanting description. When he spoke of Kundry as his most original female character and talked to her of himself and his attitude towards women — starting with Giulia, whom he mentioned in his biography of Beethoven — or else of Beethoven's empty and lonely life, she might well rejoice that she had entered Wagner's life.

And now came their excursion into the " Franconian Switzerland," which began to the tune of: " *Begibt mein Herr sich auf die Reise* (When my lord starts on his travels)," [1] and went off with the greatest merriment and gaiety. On his return he felt impelled to put on record his views on literary and musical composition (*Über das Dichten und Komponieren*) [2] — " even if you make fun of me," as he jestingly said to his wife. This article occupied his mind extraordinarily, and he kept reading her extracts from it. The background of it is formed, of course, by his political opinions, which were becoming more and more pessimistic, while unfortunately the estrangement from Bismarck, caused by the unfortunate experiences which they had been through, was growing more and more pronounced, and even Feustel was powerless to prevent it, though, holding the views that he did, such an ardent patriot as Wagner could not go over to the opposite camp; but he viewed with forebodings the dangers threatening the future of the Empire. When we read Frau Cosima's diaries, we might almost take them for the prophecies of a Cassandra. On almost every page we find warning intimations of the horrors through which Germany has subsequently lived.

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[1] Olivier's air from Boïeldieu's *Jean de Paris.*—Tr.

[2] Published in *Bayreuther Blätter*, July 1879.—Tr.

But all this did not prevent him from enjoying his life with his family wonderfully. Nothing could be more beautiful than their walk through a cornfield, about which she writes: " Richard led us along a little path through the middle of a cornfield, and we were lost to sight in an ocean of wheat-ears, and while thus swallowed up, our eyes fell upon innumerable cornflowers, like a greeting from Heaven, the ether turned to stars — azure stars of the deep! " Such were the idyllic scenes among which he lived and which gave such rapture and contentment above all to her. On returning home he read her his essay, expressing his fear lest her father might apply what he said about Brahms in it to himself, upon which she replied " that however much I might recommend discretion to myself and others, so far as Richard was concerned all that I felt necessary was to know that, come what might, he was quite free " — after which he stood before her portrait and said that it was a noble reproach to him; and as she went with him into the room which she had arranged for him, he said " that he meant to give me a treat as soon as a really good idea occurred to him. . . . I reminded him," she goes on, " that fifteen years ago this month I came to him at Starnberg. As we recalled the material conditions of life at that time, Richard remarked with a sigh: ' I regret my whole life.' To which I replied: ' Yet we found each other.' And Richard answered: ' Yes, but fifteen years too late.' " She pursued this train of thought with some melancholy, writing on the morning of the 28th: " Whether it was the strains of *Tristan* that I was drinking in avidly, or whether I had unconsciously dropped off to sleep and was dreaming, I woke up in such a state of melancholy that I felt my life-work to be more than I could cope with. I believe that though states of ecstasy may heighten one's vitality, yet at the same time every one of them is a challenge to death. But day-time sees to it that this mood (*Stimmung*) shall find no expression (*Stimme*)." On the same day she accompanied him to the Bürgerreuth, about which she writes: " We first stopped before the theatre and rejoiced to see how things were growing in the grounds, and recalled the days of turmoil when the *Platz* was full of animation. The sight of it caused me inexpressible emotion. In this building, lofty in its conception, yet full of melancholy, Richard's greatness towers up in isolation, and, as he himself remarked, 'There it stands, like a madman's folly, yet I had them all here, emperors and kings and all.' The consciousness of his greatness is almost pathetic to me; for at the same time I feel my own unworthiness, and the melancholy which hung over me, big with tears, lies like a tangible weight upon my heart. How can he make amends to the world — how can I make amends for the crimes which the world has committed against him? The thought that he loves me, and that his love for me is a comfort to him, is my salvation from feelings that I cannot express. And as though he was aware of all the emotions that agitated my soul, he began to speak of his contentment, looking the while at the children, who were revelling like Bacchanals in the meadow. Blessings upon all that gives him joy! All hail to thee, silent and sublime edifice, emblem of highest power and deepest misery! Accept my repentance, love, and longing, all combined in a single greeting!" But what a change there has been since then, and what an extraordinary force arose out of this melancholy in later days!

Yet grave conflicts now sprang up over the theatre, chiefly owing to the Master's determination to postpone the production of *Parsifal*, which caused grave doubts to the *Verwaltungsrat* and serious efforts on the part of his friends to devise the necessary explanation for this decision. And none proved his mettle so finely as Adolf Gross, who did everything in his power to lay the foundations for the future festival as they ought to be laid. It was at this time that the faithful Friedrich von Schön wrote from Worms suggesting that they might try to interest the Bundesrat and the Reichstag in Bayreuth. Both the Master and his wife were very doubtful about these efforts, and Wagner said quite frankly that he would only be able to work if he could be guaranteed the interest on three million marks; and when difficulties were again put in his way for a time by the *Verwaltungsrat*, he was even determined to carry out his idea of migrating to America and, in certain conditions, staying there.

He discussed this with Frau Cosima quite seriously, and it was only because a separation would have been necessary between them, at least for a time, that the plan was never considered again; for he did not fear the voyage on his own account, but on that of the children, and he said that, should a disaster happen, the children at least must be left to her. But the whole idea proved unnecessary, and the whole atmosphere, which was rather heated, gradually calmed down after Frau Cosima had written to Herr Bürkel, a member of the secretariate of the King's Household. It may be said that Feustel was always a most disturbing element, while his son-in-law had the art of pouring oil on the waters, a quality which made him undeniably superior to the old man. But now came another trouble: little Eva fell ill with scarlet fever. Great alarm was naturally felt at first, and the sick child had to be isolated from the others. The Master wanted to take them to the Fantaisie, but Frau Cosima was against this and proposed the villa at that time belonging to Feustel, on the sunny hill near Bayreuth, which witnessed so many delightful festivities in after days when their noble friend Gross and his wife lived there. Wagner wrote at once, and Feustel was delighted to receive the children. Meanwhile Eva's illness ran its course quietly, and everybody was in good spirits. In such a mood Frau Cosima wrote to her friend Mimi: " It is all very well about these ideal friendships, and the faith that moves mountains, and the love that wings its way over them, but when things come to such a pass that we no longer know where to find each other, I find it a little excessive. I hear from Emma W. that you are in Venice, dearest Mimi, but I do not know whereabouts you are in the city of dreams, or for how long, so I have to address my letter to the Ministry, which is really rather formal. All this sounds as if I were reproaching you, though I know quite well that it was my turn to expect a silence. Which of us was it that planted the standard of this hyperidealism? Upon my word, I do not know, but I would gladly throw the blame on you, since I am suffering for it so acutely. I wonder whether you have heard what an interruption there has been in our accustomed life. Eva caught the scarlet fever, which led to an exodus of the children to the Riedelsberg and then to a temporary camping-out in the sun in the afternoons, while my father, who was on a visit to us just then, played to us. Finally my father took Lulu with him to Munich, where she spent a gay day with him, afterwards going on to the Bassenheims for a fortnight. Not only my father, but all the other people whom my daughter met have said many nice, kind things to me about her, and so far I may look upon her little excursion as a success. This is the chief event in our quiet life. The little one's illness has, as it were, enabled me to win a new heart; for during her three weeks in bed, when we were *tête à tête*, many things have developed in her which would not have appeared in the ordinary course of life, so that what appeared to be a trial has turned out a gain. My life with my husband has not been too much interrupted, and I carry away a friendly memory of this curious period." She next went on to speak of Charlotte Kalb's *Memoirs:* " Your assurances that Charlotte Kalb's *Memoirs* had interested you gave me great pleasure. I was almost reproaching myself for having recommended them to you. It is one of those books in which one has oneself to contribute so much that one ends by not knowing what one feels — whether it is the impression that one carries away, or what is in the book itself. And at times there is something that rushes into one's soul and bursts the flood-gates — I hope it can never be what is spurious, but it is often what is incomplete or distorted, which it is not fitting to recommend to others. And so I could not help feeling that it was very bold of you to have given the book to my father, who could have found no interest whatever in it, and I feel that the ladies with whom he is friendly would feel still less. When I tried, very confusedly and fragmentarily, of course, to explain what had fascinated you and me in it (rather clumsily, I admit) and, touching upon facts, as I always do, spoke about the burning of Schiller's letters, and how that incident had affected me, he said: '*Eh bien, et après?* (Very well, what then?),' at which I was quite abashed.

" But it was my husband who presented me with this dear book. He thought the portrait very like me. And now you find a spiritual resemblance too, and so what I valued becomes even dearer and more precious. During the last few days we have had a few visitors, a French couple with their little boy, who have made the journey on purpose to hear the trilogy and *Tristan* — very simple, pious middle-class people, such as are to be found, I believe, only in France, with such definite, inbred limitations, yet, for all that, out and out Wagnerians of the first water. At the same time we had a certain Herr von Weber, formerly an African explorer and diamond-miner, who is now a zealous promoter of the anti-vivisection agitation. My husband has consented to become a member of the committee. He read us a letter from the Crown Princess's secretary, which shows how people here are going to get into a state of alarm again. He also described the influence of Helmholtz and his wife, which had paralysed all his efforts. 'Science' — that is the great word by which sympathy for this agitation is shelved. He asked me whether you were not in a position to neutralize the influence of the Helmholtzes. I replied that he must indulge no hopes on this score, nor must he write to you, but that I would communicate with you. He is certainly a remarkable man, full of earnest conviction and self-abnegation, and his cause is a good one, but who can foretell what footing it will gain in Germany?

"What and where is Germany? . . .

"In a few days' time we shall receive a visit from Herr von Schön. He wants to submit our cause to the good folk in Parliament. We cannot but let him act, after he has proved such a friend, but we do not hope for much, though we have no fears either." And she once more reverted to Rubinstein's article on Schumann.[1] During that very summer this unfortunate composer had been judged with originality, but with justice, at Wahnfried, and in a sense this article of Rubinstein's, which appeared in the *Bayreuther Blätter*, echoed this judgment; so she writes: "What did you say to the Schumann article? R. is reaping quite a harvest of assentient opinions from important quarters at present, and will now develop his powers as a writer. The advertisement, too, has had an effect which we did not expect yet here, and my father was enchanted with the article 'On Opera-poetry (*Über das Opern-Dichten*).'[1] We shall make no friends in the hostile world: that is neither possible nor desirable, but perhaps we may draw closer our little community of friends. . . . That would already be a considerable achievement. — We have come to terms with Naples, and I really think that the winter of 1880 will see us in our abode at Posilippo. I should be glad to stay and yet glad to go, as it is our wish to do, only I have a certain anxiety as regards climate; but so far our star has been kindly, and I am sure it will not pale."

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[1] *Bayreuther Blätter*, August 1879: "*Über die Schumannsche Musik.*—Tr.

Wagner and his wife had been concerned about this question for some long time past, and the renting of a lodging had involved long and not very satisfactory correspondence. Meanwhile the family was once more united. Eva had entirely recovered, and, as frequently happens after childish illnesses, her health was extraordinarily improved. The Master's interest in the children had been proved in a particularly beautiful fashion during this period of illness. Every day he went to and fro between Wahnfried and Riedelsberg, leaving the sick child in her mother's care, while he undertook to look after and supervise those who were well. All this forms a picture of peace and infinite happiness even during these days of sickness. Franz Liszt, that "pilgrim and wanderer," was staying at Wahnfried, where he felt more at ease than beneath his "three flagstaffs in Rome, Pest, and Weimar," as the Master used to put it, and where he wished to find a peaceful close to his existence; and while he was there, a fine plan was hatched. His grand-daughter Daniela was to accompany him on his journey to Munich. Frau Cosima made the most admirable arrangements for this journey beforehand and persuaded others to do the same, especially through "Kapellmeister" Hermann Levi, who enjoyed a rich meed of confidence, pity, and sympathy from her, so that her letters to him are among the most beautiful and expressive that we possess, which is saying a good deal. But it was characteristic of this unique woman's broad-mindedness to confide in a man who, overcoming all his prejudices, and by a constant struggle with himself and his traditions, was serving the Master's works and the house of Wahnfried in the most touching way, far more so than others who had boasted themselves to be the Master's most devoted pupils and friends — for so long, indeed, that they had come to believe it themselves. And so this correspondence, which goes back almost to the time when Levi first appeared at Wahnfried, offers a wealth of the most sublime and beautiful thoughts. For Frau Cosima appears in it not only as a woman of delicate sensibilities and the solicitous mistress of Wahnfried, but, first and foremost, as a thoroughly loyal and sympathetic friend. Hermann Levi, too, had had a heavy burden laid upon him by fate. It cannot be said that his life was divided against itself, but he knew life's contradictions, and for that very reason remained true to himself, that he might be true to others.

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[1] *Bayreuther Blätter*, September 1879.—Tr.

I remember a remarkable incident in the life of this rare being, who was destined to be the first to conduct *Parsifal.* It was in the spring of 1875, when he had come for a performance of *Der Freischütz* got up by my father at the Stadttheater of Regensburg with the choirs of his choral societies, the principal roles being allotted to leading artists from Munich, Heinrich Vogl singing the part of Max, and Kindermann that of Kaspar, while Possart had offered to assume the role of Samiel at this unique combination of choral societies and artists of the first rank. The orchestra was reinforced by a whole number of artists from Munich, led by the first violin (*Konzertmeister*) H. Abel. Levi was also present as a member of the audience at this performance, which interested him, too, as a problem. I was present at the reception of the Munich artists, who were driven round the town in carriages, and since they arrived in the morning, a visit to the famous *Wurstküche* (sausage-shop) of Regensburg, was included in the itinerary — a homely place, if you like, but it was one of the sights of the old imperial city. This *Wurstküche* stands just by the bridge over the Danube, and the eddying river (*Donaustrudel*), of which the folk-song sings, rushes and rages just before this humble hut, which is such a popular resort. Though Levi took part in the drive too, he did not enter the house, out of religious scruples, but walked along the river-bank. I instinctively joined him, but he said with a smile that I must not deprive myself of the treat, upon which I told him with childish candour that I could have it any day — and stayed with him. As he laid his hand on my head — I was not yet eleven years old at the time — I noticed a slight trembling in it, almost as if he had been touched by this action; and I cannot help thinking of this as I now read the letters which Frau Cosima wrote him, in which, quite apart from the absolute loyalty which he had displayed from the beginning, she was also moved mainly by the pity which she felt for him in a sad and tragic love-affair, to which, as we shall see, she alludes below. She had been his confidante, and treated him accordingly. Here we touch a new chord in her life, which contains no dissonant note, but rings full and true in the whole great harmony of her life. This is all the more important since, side by side with Lenbach, he was recognized by her as the man best able to champion the Master's ideas in Munich. We shall see how Lenbach could not get away from his own idiosyncrasies as a graphic artist and reached Wahnfried, not by the same paths as were open to the musicians who sought access to it, but rather by a direct way all his own, thus showing the difference between him and Levi. But it would be wrong to separate them, especially if we recognize Frau Cosima as the enchantress who acted as a link between the lost " paradise " of Munich and Wahnfried. There can be no doubt that for a time these two L's, Lenbach and Levi, together with a third — King Ludwig — stood for Munich in her mind. She herself tells us how clearly her memories of Munich rose up in her mind as she wrote to him, though they did not cause her to forget the present: " Thank you for your letter, dear Kapellmeister, it brought me all sorts of things that gave me pleasure — for instance, your description of the performances for the King. While reading it I recalled the concerts in the Residenztheater,[1] the last time Schnorr sang (he sang the forging-song — *Schmiedeliede* — concerts such as the world will perhaps never hear again; there was the Prelude to the third act of *Tannhäuser*, and, following directly upon that, the *Huldigungsmarsch* heard in the distance, intervals of two hours, a sea of roses, and all that sort of thing, in the little, empty, bright auditorium! The performances must have been less intimate, and even more ghostly, and I felt, as it were, an echo of your feelings at the end of them. Do not the performers feel the absence of a public as something wanting when they are performing such feats? If not, it speaks well for their artistry. — But you had promised to tell me something about the marches, and I am curious to know whether you are gradually arriving at a point of view; you must really have found out the secrets hidden beneath the 4/4 time. But I also want to speak to you about the concert-hall — we had no time for this during those twelve hours. I quite understand that there is not much you could tell us during that day: the English saying that the greatest men are those about whom the world hears nothing is rather paradoxical, but quite comprehensible. It is becoming increasingly clear to me that the deepest feelings, the sublimest intimations, find no words to express them — indeed, that they seek for none! I remember how, in my youth, when some idea occurred to me that struck me as good, I at once felt impelled to express it, and yet, on the other hand, felt a sort of shame in doing so. I got over this by lying, by putting the idea into the mouth of my sister or a friend and quoting it as such; nowadays I mostly keep such things to myself. And so I marvel that those who have been through a great deal do not really grow tired of expressing their views — and printing them — as, for instance, Malwida M. Have you got her latest book? If you like, I can send it you, together with Charlotte Kalb's *Memoirs*, which have interested me quite remarkably. And so Lenbach will not have my dog! I hope he will give a better welcome to the piano, which is now on its way to him — perhaps, indeed, has already arrived. Please inaugurate it (*einweihen*) nicely in A flat major or B major, so that the beautiful room may also be consecrated (*geweiht*) by the music. Fas and Faf [1] are now guarding our theatre up there, and feeling quite happy. I always put a nice interpretation upon my friends' actions, and so I do the same with Lenbach's refusal too. I am very glad that you liked the little book on Wagner's language.[1] Wolzogen can certainly not vie with Nietzsche as a stylist at present, but I most decidedly hope that he will train himself to be a writer; I agree with you that he is not a born one. Wolzogen has one of the most curious natures I have ever come across, a life so completely absorbed in an idea would seem incredible had one not seen it."

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[1] These were the special performances for the King, to which the public was not admitted, on July 12, 1865. — Tr.

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[1] The big Saint Bernard that acted as watch-dog at the Festspielhaus. — Tr.

She now committed both her father and her daughter to his charge, for the journey which they were now contemplating was for purposes of personal propaganda, in which her daughter was to act, so to speak, as the representative of Wahnfried, side by side with Liszt, who was also charged with special instructions for Herr von Bürkel, which gave a special significance to this visit, of which Liszt wrote the following characteristic account from Rome: " I add this postscript to the eleven-page letter which Daniela wrote you from Munich. We called on Levi on Monday, exactly as arranged. I carried out your instructions with regard to State Councillor Bürkel, and so soon as his professional duties allow, he will make haste to come to Bayreuth. Daniela bore herself well in the presence of Frau Wöhrmann, Üxküll and Frau Bürkel, Lenbach, Porges, and even Bernays, in connexion with whom she will tell you of a highly significant impropriety connected with the nose. Did she tell you that at the exhibition she was taken for M. Dönhoff? Not that there is anything at all annoying in that. On Tuesday we visited the show for the second time, and at two o'clock I took your charming child, who is worthy of her mother, to the station." Liszt went on to Rome, and Frau Cosima received a delightful account of her daughter's visit, with which she was doubtless highly satisfied. But her letter of thanks was once again intended as a demonstration for the benefit of a trusty friend of Bayreuth, who did not agree with her in all things, but whom she wished to convince: " The evening at your house is now over, and I admit that I am longing for your description of it, though I also beg you to take plenty of time over it. Thanks to your description, I took part in the scene in the

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[1] Wolzogen's *Über die Sprache in Wagners Dichtungen.* See Glasenapp, VI, 124.—Tr.

'Philologist's Rose-garden (*Rosenhain des Philologen*)' as well as that at the 'Royal Stables (*Marstall*)' far better than if I had been present myself. For had I been there, some of the honey, the dust from the great tomes, the chocolate-drops, and the scent of the roses would have had to fall to my share, and being (*das Sein*) would have interfered with seeing (*das Sehen*). As for L., I had guessed the circumstances which you describe from the few charming lines which he wrote me. Fortunately, he can make studies during this period of dissipation and, in a certain sense, go on with his work; his art is bound up with this world-event, which provides him with a motive. Conditions are quite different for a poet, and in absolute contrast for a musician, from whom virtue can only go forth when there is silence around him. Nature has provided this silence with cruel clumsiness for the latter, and with wonderful sublimity for the former, thanks to his ideas, which drive out the world. This brings me to the *Bayreuther Blätter*, and I must say that I cannot agree with you. Many of the articles have brought me something new and stimulating, and I cannot consider my husband's articles out of place among productions which prove one thing — namely, that a few men of character and intelligence have been found who have allowed their whole life and activity to be determined by his ideas, and who, with him and through him, are bidding farewell to our culture of today and attempting to bring a new one into being by the power of their longing and hope. I believe that to proceed quietly along the way on which we have started will lead to very creditable results, and that my husband will shine forth among his fearless friends like the sun surrounded by the planets. Only wait a little.

"With regard to the essay on Schumann, all that Rubinstein intended to do was, I believe, to show that he was a very mediocre musician. All sorts of French articles about R. W. have reached us through the agency of young Liphardt, besides his portrait. Good God! What is one to say to people who naïvely confess that they are denying their convictions in order to express them? (How glad I am to turn away from this and thank you for the quotation from Goethe, which I had quite forgotten!) Unlike you, I believe that one must take one's faith to church with one, and not receive it from the Church, which merely directs one's faith into the right channels, and it seems to me that Protestantism can do this better than Catholicism has been able to do since the time when the Protestant spirit split off from it (not the Catholicism of Dante and the Mystics, which had a spirit of protest). Read Calderón's *Autos* and you will be horrified at their hair-splitting aridity, helped out by theatrical machinery — yet Calderón was a very great poet. And then read *Parsifal*, for the possibility of whose existence we — like Goethe and Schiller — have to thank the courage of Luther! So far as the burden of sin is concerned, it is just the same as with faith — one feels it or one does not feel it, without the aid of the Church; but in Catholicism it is easier to dispose of it when one feels it. However, this exposition seems to me otiose, since you have already admitted that I am in the right and are only using your antipathy for our poor Church — of which it is so easy to make fun — in favour of Catholicism. Where is the story of Keller's which you mention to be found?

"I think I have answered all your questions except about the performances. What I was told about *The Valkyrie* can be traced back to a newspaper. I shall accept no reports of your conducting, but shall wait until we are in Munich and see *Tannhäuser*. Everybody confirms your judgment of Kindermann; it is rather difficult for us to have to realize that a person whom we have come to regard in course of years as of no use (for our purposes) should now be excellent — better, indeed, than one with whom my husband was entirely satisfied and whom he would unquestionably invite again for any festival. But we have lived to see such odd metamorphoses in this connexion that I say nothing to the contrary.

"And now farewell, dear friend, and many thanks; when you find it convenient, do describe Sunday evening, Monday and Tuesday morning for me. Do not forget *Nirwana*[1] in *Die Sansara* and accept the most friendly greetings from the Ganges!"

Meanwhile the Feast of SS. Cosmas and Damian had not passed by unobserved at Wahnfried, and the heroine of the day celebrated the occasion by giving her husband a present, thus reminding him of his own youth.

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[1] Bülow's symphonic poem *Nirwana*. — Tr.

But, in spite of all the preparations for their journey, life went on quietly, the Master's work and her own proceeding side by side, while they met over the books which they read together and in the searching discussions which they held daily. It is characteristic that the past did not figure in these talks for its own sake only, but was always brought into the most immediate connexion with the present. Thus on October 3 she writes: " During dinner we fell to talking about Marie Mouchanoff, and, through her, about women in general. Richard said: 'I cannot really talk to any woman. Nowadays it might be said that you have spoilt me. But in earlier days I did not know you.' Even Marie Mouchanoff, for all her great and exalted qualities, remained alien to him, in spite of her sympathy, but it was the things that had been told him about her that were responsible for this. I said to him jestingly that he had too fertile a mind — that was why people did not produce their true effect upon him. He construed them to himself, and if he construed them well, then they disappointed him; if badly, then they remained strange to him." This caused her mixed feelings, as was bound to happen about many things. When, for instance, she wanted to adorn the memory of October 10 by a charming present, he surprised her by anticipating her action and, as he himself remarked, half in irony and half in sorrow, spoilt her own pleasure in making a present. For the prodigious tension that possessed him, as the direct outcome of his creative work, and for which his kind heart always felt the deepest regret afterwards, produced in him an excitation that led more and more often to spasmodic attacks. His physical condition now made a journey to the south urgently necessary. He wanted it planned on as comprehensive a scale as possible, and Frau Cosima had to comply with these stipulations, which were, so to speak, a *sine qua non.* And so she made all preparations in Naples, as well as for a visit *en route* to Munich, where she was bent upon stopping so as to take a personal hand in the negotiations, as well as getting back into touch with various circles there. Levi was accordingly requested to find them lodgings, and did so with touching devotion, though he had really very little idea how to manage such things. But when she entrusted him with such commissions, he was richly rewarded by the words with which she accompanied her request. Thus, impressed by her husband's poor state of health, she wrote to him as follows: " In case of any talk about our stay in Munich, will you lay great stress upon my family's bad state of health generally and say that it calls for the greatest care? If we were forced to see people, my husband could not possibly stay in Munich for a single day. If everything is managed in a sensible and reasonable way, then I hope for a few pleasant days, perhaps with the Prelude to P[*arsifal*]. . . .

" Your remark about the duet in *Lohengrin* astonished me. It seems to me almost as if you did not view the works sufficiently from the poetical point of view, which surprises me, because, after all, you are not a mere musician and have shown me that you have so much feeling for true poetry. I believe that if you had had a vivid conception of the character of Lohengrin, as well as of his relation to Elsa — if you had allowed this scene, which might almost be a miniature from a holy missal, to work upon you by its angelic purity — then you would also find that the music, with its cadences, is the most fitting in which it could be clothed. In this scene all L.'s feelings are of tranquillity, harmony, fulfilment without desire, a possession of the soul (*Seelenbesitz*); and in Elsa, too, the passionate desire to know has nothing in common with the longing and unrest of earthly love. The union of words and music in this passage is as consummately harmonious as that between the body and the garment in a work of Phidias. Why do you thus consider the music, the garment which glorifies the body (*die verklärende Gewandung*), as a thing apart? In like fashion the words will always give you the key to the underlying conception by which the character (*Artung*) of the music is determined. When the first scene of *Tannhäuser* was expanded, entirely new words were written for the Venus passage. And one of the most speaking examples, in my opinion, is the ' Song to the Star of Eve,' which to most people is no more than a song (*Romanze*) for baritone, whereas to me it contains the whole essence of Wolfram von Eschenbach. Quite apart from the touching idea of confiding to the star a salutation to the dying woman whom he was unable to greet in person, the form of the song brings us into close touch with the poet chosen by the composer for the purpose of expressing through him a man's most noble sentiments — and this is the thirteenth-century poet Wolfram von Eschenbach, whom, though we do not know him, we divine from his works to have been like this. I think you will agree with me when, starting from what I have just said, I maintain that the perfection of this most original of works consists precisely in the fact that the words determine the music down to every individual situation, thanks to which everything that might be called mannerism (*Manier*) is banished and it is informed with the highest order of artistic vitality. Thus the duet between O. and E. [Ortrud and Elsa] must necessarily be quite different in every respect from that between Lohengrin and Elsa. So much for underlying conceptions for today. We venture to have some here for the benefit of H., in spite of Goethe, Cotta, and Bernays, the last of whom we shall probably not see in Munich either. I understood your prejudices, and also the fact that you should have given expression to them; schemes are best hatched in silence, with the aid of a few smiles, and time is the best preservative; may these means bring to fruition what you desire and what I decidedly hope for."

Meanwhile Heinrich von Stein had appeared upon the scene at Bayreuth as young Siegfried's friend and tutor. They had been waiting in the utmost suspense to see this young scholar and poet, a pupil of Eugen Dühring, who had been recommended by Malwida, and one cannot help feeling that this experiment showed a certain audacity; but there was no reason to regret the venture, for it brought into connexion with the house of Wahnfried a person who, though he did not fit in with his surroundings in every way and without any reservations whatever, was at any rate a personality and, for the very reason that he surrendered nothing of his personality, was thoroughly well suited to this circle and capable of contributing something to it. Nobody was so well able to understand this as Frau Cosima herself. And now, after a rather hasty but rich and beautiful celebration of Christmas, they started out for the south by way of Munich and travelled straight through to Naples. If anybody ever understood the south and drew from its beauty something that enriched her life, it was undoubtedly Frau Cosima. But the days at the Villa d'Angri were a time of more and more serious anxiety for her. In the first place, there was a recurrence of her husband's complaint, erysipelas, from which he had suffered before in Switzerland; so during the early days her functions were those of sick-nurse, for Evchen, too, was very ill. Later on, Daniela had an attack of typhus, a disease which at that time often attacked Germans in Naples and which afterwards, at Palermo, took toll of Siegfried as well. But she kept up her strength while acting as nurse, and when she left the gloom of the sick-room, she breathed a deep sigh of relief and gazed out upon the wondrous beauty of nature with feelings that were always cheerful, yet always grave. It is remarkable to see how, during these January days, it was to Levi that she poured out her heart most frankly and touchingly, while at the same time it was to him that she formulated her deepest and most intimate ideas. Possibly this was because Levi had just bidden farewell to her whom he had chosen as his life's companion, never to see her again alive. The letter in which she does this is written in an exalted, if depressed, mood and is extremely characteristic, for it reveals her ideas about everything and everybody: "It is our unceasing remembrance of all your kindnesses, and your remark that what I have told you about our life has in part helped you to bear your own, that now guides my pen. The news that I have to tell is, indeed, none too cheerful, nor does the outer world show us a very friendly face; yet, in spite of the sirocco and what we have been through — which is perhaps not quite at an end even now — I hope to reach the end of this letter in a contented and tranquil frame of mind. It brings you my first impressions of Naples — that is to say, no, it does not; the first time I went out was to the chemist's, for on the very second day after our arrival I had my husband and my little girl ill, the former with erysipelas, the latter with articular rheumatism, so that she was moaning and sobbing all the time. When, after four days, I walked about the garden for the first time, while my invalids were asleep, and looked out through the green foliage at the sea, or, greeted by the blooming roses, gazed at the desolate rocks, with their wild adornment of rank vegetation, such light and warmth streamed towards me from all sides that I was deeply sensible of the '*Memento vivere*' which was its message to me. 'Remember,' it seemed to say, 'that you are alive — that is, that care is your lot till the end of your life, and that every hour you hear the harsh voice, not of deprivation, but of endurance, calling to you in whatever surroundings it may find you.' But it was quite wonderful, too, that these reflections were accompanied by the melody of the Graces,[1] so that while my sorrow abandoned me to my familiar outlook upon life, the pleasing visible world, almost without any participation of my own, kept my inner consciousness resounding with music, which, so soon as I perceived it, turned to light and warmth. And as I loitered homewards, gazing upon the Gulf, I thought of the gulf by which you had said your last farewell, and, remembering that I had not thanked you for your good wish, I set to work to do so, as soon as the warning voice of the *memento vivere* sounded less loudly in my ears. Yesterday my patients went out for the first time, and thus gained a changed mental horizon, if I am not too presumptuous in supposing this; but I am endlessly and inexpressibly thankful. Now the sea is roaring, and as I listen to its raging, I cannot help thinking of the aimlessness and objectlessness of human endeavour. I would gladly send you back the book of which I have become so fond, for I know no more charming means of intercourse than through books, but I am afraid of the post. My little Monsieur had to lie here three days at the custom-house, and I do not know how I managed to snatch it away at last; so I am waiting for a German who is returning. On almost every page you will find evidence of my delight in this book, which my husband read, too, with the greatest interest; how the fable of his Olympian nature fades away, to be replaced by the reality of suffering genius! Certain dicta on thought, and on lucidity in error, which made me think of Nietzsche, have become household words with us, and how comforting they have been to me during certain explosions! What I hold nearest and highest was present with me as I read. But I also thank you for the little chairs, which are of the greatest service here, and for the cards, which have already been used on two evenings. And for all the trouble you have taken, besides, and especially for the fact that you yourself do not feel it to be any trouble. My husband was saying yesterday how much he regretted that he really did not know you as an artist, and how glad he would have been to go to the performances. I recall with particular gratitude the apparition of the Graces; they were certainly neither Greek nor Wagnerian, but for the very reason that they were not so many other things, and that they had a girlish appearance, it was possible for the music to reveal its divine qualities. Negative qualities (*das Nicht*) count for much more than is generally believed. If, for instance, Fräulein Weckerlin would only omit certain things, the genius of Wagner would work better through her. So pray tell her to let her death-scene proceed entirely without gesticulation. Just as a bird hides itself away to die, so the soul veils itself more and more closely; the music speaks for it, while her adorer is seeking it among the stars. I fear that, in spite of the music, which is eloquent of everything, most people have no notion of a soul dedicating itself to death, or of the terrifying gulf that separates it from everything living. Otherwise such well-meaning and sentimental conceptions of it could not exist; was it not you that told me that our friend B., a Schopenhauerian, did not believe in the possibility of an annihilation of the will? So to him the lives of St. Elizabeth and Francis of Assisi are mere fables? How strange! I myself know of two examples of this, and in France, too. Eugénie [de Guérin], whose *Journal* has been published, and my confessor, who was conscious of his vocation at the age of twelve, who knew nothing of this world save his priestly duty and could not tell whether to advise me to go to the theatre or not, because he had never known one. In his blindness he said to me calmly: '*Cela ne fait pas de différence* (It makes no difference).' All that was lacking to make him a saint was martyrdom, and he would undoubtedly have borne this joyfully, just as he endured his life in quietude for himself and pity for others. I also believe in the possibility of a change of will, whether through outward compulsion — which is most frequent — or inward illumination, as, for instance, Rancé, who found the woman he loved lying dead, and turned Trappist. Most people are of course incapable of so much as understanding this sort of conversion. But where am I getting to? Is it not better to keep one's eyes fixed upon outward appearances? Just lately as I was considering the attraction which Italy exerted over us all, at the same time keeping before my eyes the grace of form and utter lack of idealism displayed by the people, all sorts of curious thoughts occurred to me on the subject of man as an animal and on that of beauty; what lures us here is the will to live. What binds us to Germany is the sense of a higher vocation than that of enjoying life; but since we are alive and in existence, the form of what attracts us becomes very repellent to us, and if one wanted to be a real martyr, one would have to give up living in Germany and die in Italy. I already see you failing to understand me and telling me that I am overrating you; whereas I am simply being obscure. And so I will stop, with my best greetings and two requests: in the first place, for your father's speech, which you promised me; and, finally, yet another proposal — that you should take a week's holiday at Easter and spend four days here; a beautiful day here is worth purchasing at the cost of a year, and I know that you would make greater sacrifices than that to be with us."

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[1] In the Overture to *Tannhäuser*. — Tr.

This letter had scarcely been sent off when she received news of the death of the painter Feuerbach, who, with Wilhelm Busch and Lenbach, had been Levi's most intimate friend. He bewailed to her his grief at this loss, and she wrote to him entering into his sorrow with full understanding; for there is no doubt that she not only had a discriminating eye for painting, but, what is more, had always taken a deep interest in its further development, which she was all the better able to observe and judge because she had been in the closest touch with painting from her childhood upwards, or at least since the time when she had once more been brought into direct contact with her mother. It was quite otherwise with the Master, who was even pained at this deep understanding on the part of his wife, which was a trait she shared with Mathilde Wesendonck, except that in her it was not academic, but spontaneous; and even in his dreams he was haunted by her penchant for art and would often awake in alarm when his anxiety lest she might marry a painter condensed into a dream. But it is in her letters to Levi that she reflects the Master's conception of the plastic arts most beautifully, always managing to bring it generally into connexion with the art-work of Bayreuth, which was to manifest itself more and more. Thus she writes: "I should have liked, my dear friend, to express my sympathy in the feelings which affected you at the news of Feuerbach's death, but it has been impossible for me to do so till now, and I look back upon the last two months as a tribute levied upon one by life. For, with the exception of my daughter Isolde, everybody has been ill, my eldest child rather seriously so with typhus fever, and my husband with two attacks of erysipelas. But I confess that the latter anxiety alone is too much for my strength, all my other suspense and alarms in no way daze or check the flow of my vital spirits. But at his side alone my strength fails me, my heart cannot bear to feel that he, who is so exceptional in everything, should be subject to the ordinary laws of physical suffering; it cannot bear it, and yet it must, and this leads to a curious state of self-reproach. Were I but all that the secret exigencies of my life admonish me to be, he could not suffer, his well-being could not be checked, and this feeling of mine would really be harder than I could bear, did it not lead me to an attitude of the most devout submission to God. And so I am able to bear it all, and I look out cheerfully today upon the Sabbath calm. Would you be glad to know that your friend had returned to his loving Father? Ah! was it a loving Father who sent him into His world, or do you conceive of the world and of God as two essentially different things? I hope that he returns to the place where he existed from all time (*da, wo von je er gewesen*), into the wonder-land of night, the land of that which is not, never to return from thence. To me, as to you, individuals are everything, and I believe that there are certain people who are exempted from the eternal process of change and becoming, who find salvation! How? I know quite well, but cannot express it; I will not wrangle with you about whether F[euerbach] may be numbered among these elect ones, and since, as Wagnerians, we know fairly definitely that, with the exception of the portrait-painter, our age is not capable of producing any painters, we will hold the exceptional qualities of Feuerbach's artistic impulse in high honour and harbour a grudge against the German world for having nothing to offer him but funeral orations (*Kirchhofsphrasen*). Busch's conception of Schopenhauer's philosophy may certainly be called a consoling one, and according to it we may look for an exalted state of existence for all humanity, but I am content with salvation in individual cases. A sister of charity who is nursing my daughter has impressed us beyond description. Yet I consider that there is nothing especially Catholic in this, but that these qualities have survived in Catholicism. But I quite understand that it is easier to be converted from the Jewish faith to Catholicism than to Protestantism; for the pope may represent a fulfilment of prophecy, the Messiah whom the Jews are awaiting. Your father's speech interested me very much, I never knew anybody who entered upon his old age or closed his life so happily. How enviable to have nothing but happy things to record as one looks back upon one's life! How different for us, who bear within us a sense of ruin and see around us nothing but what is doomed to destruction; our prayer is: 'Why hast Thou forsaken us?' Yet I understand your joy at your father's contentment, which was certainly the result of true righteousness. — But now you have had *Tristan*, and while occupied with the work you have surely forgotten all that was unsatisfactory in the rendering. Both life and immortality are contained in it. My friend, it was not the institution that I referred to in my eulogies, why do you try to attribute what was especially intended for your own activity to a collective body, with which we can never have anything in common? And since I am upon the subject, I should like to ask you, whenever and wherever Jäger is in question, to speak of him with nothing but praise, my husband is earnestly bestirring himself with a view to an appointment for him, and D.L. of N. informs me that at Munich, which he has visited, people were unanimous upon both points. I ask you this in order that you may not work against my husband without intending it. — Many thanks for the Lenbachiade, it gave my husband great pleasure, too, and greatly delighted our friend Joukoffsky, whom you know, and of whom we see a great deal.

" My last page shall be devoted to Naples, or rather to the Villa Angri, which is the fairy element in a fairy-tale. I believe that in after days we shall look back upon our stay here as quite beyond belief. The almond-trees are in blossom now, transfiguring the wild rocky gorge with a roseate glow, while everything is fragrant and ready to burgeon; there is such a hum and a stir, such a reaching forth, such radiant brilliance, that poor humanity feels like a ghost, like a dream-figure, sprung from the immobile chaos of the abyss. When I think of how the flowers are allowed to yearn forth from the stones, unprotected by grass or moss, how the stones are parched, as it were, by an eternal thirst, while before it all lies the fruitless motion of the sea, it makes me melancholy; but when I see it, it overwhelms me, and renders me incapable of thought. And so I do not find it easy even to write, and if there are various points in your letter which I have not taken up, you must blame the south. With the exception of a few poems of Giordano Bruno's, I have read nothing here and seen as good as nothing.

" Now accept the most friendly greetings from us all, and send us some news soon from the hyperborean realms."

But, as we see, she could not get away from religious matters, which were no obstacle between them, but prompted her to original reflections. Both Josef Rubinstein and Joukowsky had accompanied them to Naples, for both of them were, so to speak, attached to the service of *Parsifal*, the former for the preparation of the piano-score, the latter for the scenery; and it interested her to compare them with each other, only to draw a distinction between them afterwards in her characteristic fashion. While Richard Wagner himself said that he would be glad to hear of Levi's baptism and expressed his determination to go to communion with him, Frau Cosima managed to discuss these questions in quite a different fashion and give scope to her own ideas and sentiments: " At last it has rained a little, and I believe the spring has come. I hope that the warm weather has returned for you too, dear friend, and that all the north-east winds have gone, so that I can send you through fire and water without too great pangs of remorse. Gedon has also written and promised 'the casket and small box (*Schrein und Dose*)'; but now I want the clock, he is to make them all, for it is the measurements that are the trouble — kindly ask him in my name to do this. I know that he will do it, and, provided that one believes in people with all one's heart, they do wonders; so please worry Gedon as though you were absolutely uncertain of him and yet had the firmest faith in him. I enclose a few lines for M.L., since you have not given me his address. How would it be now if, when May comes, you were to go, not through the fire, but into it — that is, if you were to pack up your traps and pay us a visit? We shall probably stay a few months longer than we had intended, and the *Queen of Sheba* (*Königin von Saba*) will none the less be in the land of the living. If you would like to give yourself a treat in connexion with this affliction, read Calderón's *Sibyl of the East* (*La Sibila del Oriente y Gran Reyna de Saba*). Much, or rather the whole scheme of this piece is theatrical and Catholic, but in the theatricality there is a curious hair-splitting mysticism, and the superstructure is as audacious as the Church of the Gesù here or in Rome. His ideas and allusions correspond to the many florid convolutions (*Verschnörkelungen*) of ornament on this side of the Alps, but they often contort themselves (*sich verschnörkeln*) into a deep insight into the essence of things. And so the '*Shofa*' (I believe Puttkamer has not yet fixed the spelling of this word) is to be heard in Munich: since the whole world is dancing after him, it is of course natural that people should not be kept waiting for him too long in the place which we once occupied.

" What you said about Rubinstein's article delighted us. There is a peculiar joy in seeing how a deep conviction masters all unpropitious circumstances, and leads to a development, nay, to a profession, for which many far more happily endowed, yet lacking this one essential quality, might perhaps envy R.

Anyone who had said some years ago that R. would become a writer, and a good one too, would have been laughed to scorn. Now I wish that he would write an essay on Weber, that great and pure genius, whom such people as Raff, Brahms, etc., utterly despise, but from whose type of melody sprang that of Wagner, which stands in somewhat the same relation to it as Brünhilde does to Erda. I might almost maintain that those who have no feeling for the melody of Weber are estranged from nature, from forest, sun, and water. Did the performance of the march make the same impression on you as it always does on me — that of a representation of the life of a bold, free people, contending with the sea and about the sea? Anyone who was to discuss the three marches properly could by so doing present a complete picture of W.'s genius, but this would require imagination. We have once more received a grand impression here from ecclesiastical music through a *Miserere* of Leo's. This is art, true, sublime, and impersonal art, the only one that I would place by the side of our drama. In view of my purpose I am not glad to find that Schumann was Mendelssohn; otherwise they are both pretty indifferent to me. Our friend Gersdorff is bringing Lassalle to you. Holtz is still at Amalfi — my daughter found *Nora* repulsive, Frl. v. M. is, however, enchanted with it. Less and less often can I force myself to read, and I believe that I shall entirely forget how to do it. If you come, we shall be able to talk about your people. Do you think that you and R. could serve as typical examples of the species? I do not think so. But now farewell. I enclose the instructions for Gedon, so that you may quite understand the question about the clock (at first I only wanted a cover, but now he may order the whole thing)."

So it was Levi whom she had chosen to supervise the preparations for the presents and surprises that she was getting ready for her husband's birthday, which he was to celebrate this time beneath the sun of Naples. Levi was the best of lieutenants to her in communicating her views to the sculptor Gedon, as well as in her other purchases and transactions. It is quite charming to read how she selected him for this purpose while at the same time not omitting to point out to him that certain preparations were also being made in Bayreuth, though these met with stupid opposition, upon which she did not fail to comment. Stein's article [1] gave her an opportunity of telling him frankly what it was all about, and she now, as it were, outlined their whole program to him, thus supplying an explanation of the sense in which her own and her husband's attitude towards the Jewish question should be interpreted: "I am delighted that you were pleased with Stein's article. I am absolutely convinced that he is destined to be one of our collaborators, and you have quite rightly understood his 'Renaissance' as a chapter in the future philosophy of world-history, I was delighted with this saying of yours. The next issue of the *Blätter* will contain an article,[2] '*Erkenne Dich selbst* (Know Thyself),' which I am convinced you will find very striking. I have not forgotten that it is to you that I owe my views on the agitation; I cannot sum them up better than in the words: 'Cry of distress of one bleeding to death (*Notschrei des Verblutenden*),' by which I recently characterized the movement to M. von M. It is not only the bad qualities of the Germans, but the good ones too, that have rendered them incapable of sustaining a conflict, or, if you prefer, a process of amalgamation, with a race thus equipped for realism. They were bound to go under and degenerate, because their gifts did not attain to a happy development side by side with that race, and now, when people are becoming alive to the evil, a howl is set up. This is not always very pleasant to listen to, and, besides, it hardly leads to anything. However, it is comprehensible. '*Erkenne Dich selbst*' will tell you what remains to be said. Joukovsky sends you his kindest regards, he is indefatigably sketching his sixth magic garden, while R. is engaged with the seventh version of his article. But none of this matters, the main thing is the work and the spirit in which it is done.

"Do you think there will be a performance of *Tristan and Isolde* in the spring (April)? I ask because of Count Gobineau, who wants to pay us a visit at that time and would be glad to have such a wonderful experience. And now farewell, my friend, and accept our best and most cordial greetings."

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[1] *Bayreuther Blätter*, January 1881: "*La Renaissance: Scènes historiques par le comte de Gobineau. Besprochen von H. von Stein.*"—Tr.

[2] This article appeared in *Bayreuther Blätter*, February–March 1881.—Tr.

She was quite serious in inviting him for Wagner's birthday, the celebrations for which he had done, and was still doing, so much to help and she did so most cordially. But this was because she knew that he was absolutely suited to their circle, and she accompanied her invitation with such weighty words about art and the theatre that he must really have felt an urgent desire to come: "The box (*Dose*) arrived yesterday and is so lovely that I obtained quite a different view of life yesterday through the medium of this azure sky. Please, dear friend, give Gedon my most cordial thanks, for I am certain that my husband, too, will love this little treasure. As for the casket, do tell Gedon that if he can really get it done for me in time, I shall believe that the god of destiny considers me worthy to give my husband a treat, and if it duly arrives, I shall regard this as a sign that I may be allowed to turn what is loss in this dearest and most precious of lives to gain!

"Give my greetings to Lenbach when you see him, and ask him why he is forgetting me. You will certainly find him exactly as you left him, for neither mishaps nor good fortune can affect him in any way, and his visit to Dresden shows you how constant he is in his feelings. Even what is hasty in him and lacking in concentration seems to me indicative of inward control rather than of a dissipation of energy. I have little confidence in the powers of concentration of any man who offers a plausible appearance of calm, and how could tokens of admiration ever do any harm to a man of solid ability? But his picture of a fowl that has just been killed is a different matter.[1] I have been through a great deal in my own mind, to prevent myself from giving way to the most painful feelings, and in order to justify my friend I reviewed the whole nature of painting — of all the arts, indeed, with the exception of music. Art has to be cruel in a cruel world, and our artists treat the sufferings of created beings just as did the pitiless gods of the Hellenes, to whom compassion was unknown. Not so music: this is the art of that paradise for which we are striving and which some individuals do attain as a preparatory stage on the way towards their ultimate salvation. I believe that our yearnings are all-powerful, and that our longing for eternal bliss assures us of bliss upon earth, just as it was the desire for martyrdom that imprinted upon St. Francis the stigmata that transported him with ecstasy. And so I also cherish the conviction that the disgust that you feel and the mood of which you make me your confidante are a preparation for the growth in you of spiritual contentment. Believe me, that profound malaise is the first step towards ultimate nobility and repose, and one must perforce be dead to what is false and evil before one can live in the truth. And the intoxication of enthusiasm drives out the other, which is indeed fit cause for disgust, but not for recognition of the truth and a yearning for it; and the spectres that haunt the day vanish before the dream, and in a trance as of sleep we carry out whatever the day has set us to do. Believe me, my friend, our art is a religion. It has been made possible for art to rescue what is most holy to us from all dogmatism and rigid formalism. And just as the early Christians, in their joy, gave what they possessed to the world, as being of the world — that is, were cheerful and content whether as masters or as slaves — so, in my opinion, the circumstances of our life and calling can affect us but little, provided only we are assured of the one thing. The *Königin von Saba* — that is bad, of course! But it was very wrong of you not to read Calderón's piece, though I understand the frame of mind that made you incapable of doing so. I felt that *Königin von Saba* like a hideous nightmare, and it was not till now that your quotation enabled me to enjoy a moment of merriment through it. As for the '*Vereinshammer*' (scourge of the association) to which you refer, I should consider you to be right, were it not for the fact that the widow's mite constitutes the whole strength of our endeavour, and that we have no rich or exalted persons concerned in it. You will think this very paradoxical, but when I see to what a pass those with great possessions have brought our German Empire, I thank God that they have nothing to do with our cause. You ask whether we shall attain our goal. I do not know, and I may even say that I never think of the goal, but only of every step towards it and how this may be made a secure and well-considered one. Things will probably enter upon a surer course than they have done hitherto. And, sunstroke or no, I herewith repeat my invitation. But I do not try to persuade you, in the end it is the spirits (*die Geister*) that will counsel you to accept! Do you know that a strain of arrant materialism runs through all this nonsense about dimensions? But tell me your impressions, and do not let yourself be disturbed by 'you's' or 'we's,' for these exist only in your imagination. Many thanks for your information about the concerts and about *Nirwana*.[1] I believe that this work will continue to occupy an important position, just as the whole personality of the composer will stand out by the side of the truly great against the night-sky of time in which many categories of master will disappear. You heard the nightingale before we did, there are no birds here, for people shoot them; recently I saved a little yellow-hammer that had taken refuge in my carriage, and I have had to put him in a cage, in which he is happy now, poor little thing, for he knows what mankind are and what liberty among them means — which for him was clipped wings. But our garden is glorious, quite like the one in Germany, with Malwida walking about it picking flowers and singing, for it slopes upwards, a mass of bloom, and as one's mind follows it up to the heights, noble thoughts descend in blessing upon us and lead us into other spheres." When she writes to her friend Mimi, it is true, her mood is very different, and there can be no question that it was this very visit to Italy that more and more revived the sympathy existing between them from of old, since the days of the beautiful Marie von Buch's betrothal. In spite of all the wanderings and vicissitudes of their lives, she had inspired a deeper friendship in Frau Cosima than any other woman had done, and just as she had been her first and most understanding confidante, so up to this beautiful and noble woman's death Frau Cosima sought and found in her the most understanding of friends — even more than in her bosom friend "Tante Malwida." Hence the greetings which she sent her from Naples were of a very special kind: "Though beneath the sway of distance, I recognized your warm and loving tone and saw your glance rest upon me, my dear Mimi! . . .

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[1] See Glasenapp, VI, 327.—Tr.

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[1] Bülow's tone-poem, of which Wagner spoke highly. — Tr.

" Seldom is the present conjured up before one so successfully as your presence has been by your letter. But we must not find fault with the written word for this, though at times it seems to me to be like the sea, which tells us nothing of the life of the depths, but is a thing apart from it. We had had news of you through your activities, and thanked you in our hearts. Since no other refuge exists now, it is a beautiful thing that a being exists as a refuge to those who are differently constituted from the masses. And as we withdraw further and further from practical affairs and leave them to go their own way, almost the only thing that rejoices us is your activity and your existence. Many thanks for what you have done for Rubinstein. It was a good action in the fullest sense of the word. I do not know whether it is due to my lack of ' moral earnestness ' or ' depth,' but I cannot remember either the malice of mankind or the deficiencies of life for long; so I have already as good as forgotten that since we have been here, I have really been nothing but a sick-nurse. It is very, very beautiful here, and from every point of view too, for every walk cheers my husband, and he has once more proved his infallibility by his choice of this town."

She would gladly have welcomed Frau von Schleinitz to Naples too; but this was not granted to her, and it was not till Venice that a beautiful and touching meeting took place between them. We may see, too, that this meeting was the beginning of a new depth in their mutual relations, from the fact that from this time onwards the cordial tone of their letters is still further increased by the intimate and unconstrained use of the pronoun "*Du* (thou)."

And so May 22 came round, and Frau Cosima had really arranged such a celebration down there in Naples that nothing more beautiful could have been devised. It was characteristic of Italy, and of Naples most of all, that the Master was fêted there to the highest degree, by the authorities no less than by musical circles and the Conservatoire, to which he paid a visit, and where, so we hear, he not only met with a wonderful reception, but received incentives to work of quite a peculiar kind.

The fête itself, which consisted in a wonderful dramatic performance (*Festspiel*), with a magnificent banquet and an excursion in boats on the Gulf, closing with a performance of the Grail chorus, has been exhaustively described by Glasenapp, and we should only be repeating what has already been said if we were to enter into further detail about it. Only one person was absent, and that was Liszt. He excused himself on the pretext that he would have had to evade various social duties and visits in Naples, and that his appearance at the Villa d'Angri would merely have caused annoyance and offence in various quarters, which he was bound to avoid. There can be no question that, once again, this song-bird who so loved to roam had been paralysed by the basilisk eye of the Princess Wittgenstein, so that he did not dare to venture on the journey to Naples. He was certainly missed at the party given by his daughter to celebrate Wagner's birthday, and he felt his inability to be present at it deeply.

But now came an alarm about the Master: the sea-bathing which he had been ordered did not suit him, and a deep-rooted nervous disorder persuaded him, and especially Frau Cosima, to bring their beautiful stay in Naples to an end, and strike their camp there in some haste. This was very painful to them all, and in later days nobody regretted it more than Wagner himself; but the pangs of his disease, aggravated by all sorts of material troubles, led to a serious condition of restlessness, with which Frau Cosima now dealt so touchingly. She made a rapid journey with him to Perugia, for the mountain air was expected to be good for him, and after a short time found him a refuge in Siena, which was in every way beneficial to his nerves. All the same, they had spent beautiful and unforgettable days at Naples, and they never missed their daily reading, which had a calming effect upon them. It is a most attractive trait, which bears witness to the profoundly German nature of them both, that amid the magic of Naples, where one might well be reminded of quite a different type of composition, they were occupied with *Wilhelm Meister*. And it is curious, again, that almost at the same time Levi started a discussion on this subject, to which Frau Cosima did justice in the most handsome way. Levi had fallen ill, in consequence of which he had been unable to accept her invitation to Naples. But the fact that he shared their sentiments is plain from the letter that she found time to write him, in spite of the distress that was beginning to make itself felt at the Villa d'Angri:

"Our thoughts have met in *W. Meister*, for we, too, have recently been very much taken up with it and the correspondence on the subject. Ah yes! Many things pale in one's estimation, whether people or literary works, and I regarded Aurelie and Nathalie and Therese with the same vague surprise as that with which I sometimes look at the photographs of many whom I once regarded as part of our life, but who now, as life goes on, seem to me more and more like shadows. Possibly there are books suitable for the various ages of life, and *W. M.* belongs to one's youth (Frau von W.[1] would part company with us here). And yet I remember that the very first time I read it, I thought out a modification, by which Nath. should have made Meister take Mignon to Italy, and there devote himself to her till her death — for which he would, however, be responsible; and I had a heart-rending vision of Mignon dying in her friend's arms, while reconciling him with Nath., who would have proved her sacred mission and grandeur of character by the very fact of her understanding Mignon and feeling a lofty responsibility towards her. But all this is sentimental nonsense (*Gefühls-Nopeleien*), as my husband says, and if there is much that fades away and grows dim before one's eyes, what is felt survives with correspondingly greater force within one. We are at present reading the *Oresteia*, and are crushed by it (*zermalmt*). The scene between Electra and Orestes in the *Choephoroe* is unparalleled in its surge of passion, while in its inexhaustible music it is comparable to the second act of *Tr. and I.* This is a book of abiding value, together with Shakspere and *Don Quixote*, and *Faust*, too. It is still glorious here and always cool, we have no reason to suffer from the heat. Ah, this sun! It is a great, great pity that you did not come, for you would certainly have recovered here. But I am glad that your father is with you — I will write another time about Gfrörer — that is, when you have completely recovered — and I will tell you by word of mouth about Gedon, and why I said no more about him. I have written to him." She next went on to speak once more about Levi's attitude towards art, and especially towards poetry: "I have a fairly good idea of your samples of the dramatic art. Not altogether because you are curious about the Passion-play; I can at least say that I am not, though I cannot precisely explain my reasons; for I accept the play and believe, too, that the peasants are in earnest, but I suppose I am afraid of the spirit that prompts both the play and the earnestness and inspires the gaping spectators.

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[1] Wöhrmann? She had been in Naples recently. — Tr.

"The fact that the most important member of the audience at *Tristan*[1] could not be one of your guests can quite well be explained without any thought of strained relations existing between you. In special circumstances anyone who has been singled out by destiny in any special way parts company with even the most pleasant society; and in a certain sense I might maintain that this important person belongs as little to the world as we do. Since his star has not granted to him to avoid the other, and alien, world, by withdrawing into a world of his own, and since his station in life is constantly forcing him into contact with it, this avoidance finds a more primitive expression, and conditions, moods, and occasions arise in which it is impossible to keep in touch with others, even with the most friendly people, and in which the punishment with which the Caliph threatened the poet — namely, that nobody in Córdoba should be allowed to speak to him — is felt to be the most crying necessity. This parting of the ways does not always take place quite consciously, but there it is, and nothing can undo it.

"My husband charged me to thank you for your telegram and to request you to communicate his thanks to such of the other kind people who signed it as are still in Munich. I suppose the French *Tristan* is over too by now? We are more likely to find our friends in these countries in the camp of exaggerated views and requirements than on the broad middle way of sound, practical common sense. All the same, it seems to me unjust to

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[1] The King. — Tr.

AT WAHNFRIED, June 1882

Photograph by A. v. Gross

attribute greater corruption to the present form of the French Government than to any other; it may at least show for the first time of what France is capable, for it is free, though robbed of all its hoards. And *The Mastersingers*? Did it not afford you the answer which I omitted to give you recently, lest I might make excessive demands upon your weary state? As I finished reading the *Eumenides* to myself, I asked myself whether any similar instance existed in which the co-operation of the people in the art-work was necessary, in order that the poet might bring poetry and reality into touch with each other — and Hans Sachs occurred to me. I felt it to be a special beauty that a happy *dénouement* to a comedy can never satisfy one wholly. And who expresses this for us intuitively? The poet, who, having completed his spiritual task, withdraws alone and full of renunciation to his workshop to meditate; this genuinely historical figure, first endowed with real life for us through the magic of poetic invention (*Fiktion*), announces the downfall of the realm and calls upon the people to share in his creative art! In Æschylus the Areopagus is summoned and exonerates Orestes, the people being thus exhorted to regard the existing order of things as sacred. Here the distress of the State is described by one of those who must be supposed to stand in real need of being connected with a single whole, since they are not intended to live unto themselves, the way of consolation and salvation being at the same time indicated to the people. The limits of stage convention are strained, but only in order to transport us on to a more highly ideal plane than the close of a comedy; and without comparing Shakspere's *Merchant of Venice*, in which an entirely superfluous fifth act appeared necessary to the poet, we may here admire a conclusion which is from every point of view consummate. If only we had the people to join in in the last verse (just as all the Greeks escorted the Eumenides with torches), then — we should have real art. I should probably feel the longing of which you speak if I did not believe that I carried Germany and its star with me everywhere. What is more, we carry Wahnfried with us everywhere — that is, seclusion from the world — and when I add that even our cook is a German, you will realize that we have only just so much of the foreign element as we find comfortable. As for barbarism — ah! this is indeed its home! But what place is not? However, we are going home, and I hereby notify you that in the second week of November we shall be in Munich and beg for *Lohengrin* and *The Mastersingers* (this for your own ear alone at present). A piece of Schiller's, too — *Wallenstein*, for instance — would be welcome. But I have still to explain why I say nothing about how he is (*vom Befinden*). That again is a peculiarity of mine, either a superstition, or, if you wish, sheer incapacity. But you may be sure that, since I am writing, his condition is quite a tolerable one. Otherwise you would not get many more words out of me, either spoken or written. The sea-bathing is going on busily, and the children are distinguishing themselves by their swimming. Otherwise I can find no more to say about our life. The *B. Blätter* will tell you what work has been done at the Villa d'Angri.[1] Give our respects to your father and our greetings to Lenbach, and please ask Gedon whether he has received the box. If you had been here, you would have heard a great deal about *Wilhelm Meister*, for my daughter has been reading it for the first time. Briefly, the work seems to me still to retain its value as a biography, in which the element that is not a record of experience (Mignon, Philine, Marianne) has the greatest charm and reveals the greatest truth. I really do not know whether the North Sea is the right thing for excited nerves; it is very hot here, yet always beautiful, '*ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht* (a gentle wind blows from the azure heavens),' and the moonlight nights have the effect of loosing all bonds and throwing down all barriers. The only thing is that one has to write one's letters piecemeal, for the day can hardly be said to exist. All my family send their most friendly greetings."

But they felt extraordinarily at home in Siena, and though, it is true, they already had to think about turning homewards, yet they had the joy of a visit from her father there, during which a rare confidence prevailed among them, and the days which he spent in Siena produced an artistic reaction upon him, too, the effects of which lasted for years. It may even be said that it was this visit to Siena that really caused him to realize fully that he truly belonged to his daughter alone, and that nothing could have been better for him than a draught of Lethe that should have effaced Rome from his memory, for the figure which dominated it had long since disappeared from his thoughts. But though this proved an illusion, it was a beautiful one, and Frau Cosima in particular had a happy impression of his visit, which gave a certain stimulus to her feeling for architecture and, we may say, to her Catholic sentiment; for no place was so well suited for quiet self-communion. The wide expanse of smiling country reminded her of home, and the cathedral itself filled her with awe, reminding her of the great edifice of art erected by the Master — the Temple of the Grail. Yet it was again to Levi that she wrote the most detailed and warm-hearted accounts. It is really touching to see how this noble woman's mind dwelt upon him during this visit to Italy:

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[1] *Religion und Kunst* appeared in October 1880. — Tr.

"We are getting on very well, and I think we have reason to be cheerful. For we have been spared many hard and trying conditions to which we had resigned ourselves in advance, and so we are enabled to prolong our stay in Italy for a little while longer. So my contentment is in proportion to my previous sadness, and once more I feel at home abroad. For how could anybody feel strange in these most natural surroundings, where all is soft, graceful, subtle, and full of variety — in short, where nature has much to be said about it, though little to describe. My feelings about the town of Siena are curious. I cannot tell yet whether I like it or not, but it is certain that I am glad to know it thoroughly and to spend a long time there, and that it is both impressive and unique. But, as I said, it would have been all up with your soul here, my friend! The cathedral and St. Catherine would have cast their spell upon you — the picture to which I am referring produced an effect upon me such as few pictures have ever done before, though the artist who painted it is decidedly not one of the great masters, and the subject (the reception of the stigmata) is repulsive rather than attractive to me as the subject of a picture. Then what is it that produces the effect? It is, of course, that most mysterious of spells, that most insoluble of riddles, that something which links one person to another and, in spite of space and time, finds its way through to us irresistibly by means of colour and tone. It is magnetism! But stop! Here comes the fourth dimension again, and Sodoma was not such a bad painter that I must resort to that in order to explain his power in this one work.

" From this to the secretariate of the King's Household is a big jump, such as undisciplined thoughts do make. — Why did my letter to H. v. B. surprise you? I owed him an account of our travels, and the other question upon which I touched has been in suspense for months past and is constantly under discussion. We gladly leave you out of the question, my friend, so as not to deprive you of your freedom of action; for, after all, you are an official and have a chief to whom you might appear in your own eyes to stand in a position of antagonism. But need I explain all this? I should like, however, to add just one little word, for I know that you like things in black and white: will you accept the little pictures, which have no artistic value, but will give you an echo of my impressions, somewhat as if I were to obtain some idea of the Prelude from your description. Why cannot one hear the preludes to *L[ohengrin]* and *P[arsifal]* in the dome of the Cathedral of Siena? We are partly lost to *Wilhelm Meister*, too, but have been reading *Werther* during the last few evenings with tears. And who had lent it to us? A Benedictine, who read mass in the chapel of our villa, made friends with our children, and has provided us with books! There is more grist for your mill, and I will not answer for it that I shall not see you in the monastery which this friendly soul is building near at hand, and to which he means to retire when he returns home from Spain, England, and Egypt. But as regards *Werther*, in it we once more recognized real youthful genius with its eternal attractiveness, and what are all the problems of civilization compared to the tragedy of passion? "

From Siena she next sent him word of what she wanted to do in Munich, in the shape of a request that they might be present at one of the King's special performances of *Tristan*. " I cannot interpret my relations with you otherwise than in terms of the confidence that you have reposed in me, and what I have indirectly experienced in consequence. I cannot forget who has acted as intermediary between the Royal Treasury and ourselves — that is, the Kapellmeister himself — still less can I forget who it is that Lenbach calls the 'amiable one (*den Liebenswürdigen*)'; but since it must needs be so, I will ask you to tell Herr von Bürkel that my husband has written direct to His Majesty, and that perhaps he may hope for an answer on the matter which concerns us.

"With regard to the performances, perhaps it is permissible to hope that the King will command a few works of Wagner's to be given for him privately and will then allow us to be present unseen at the performance. We should *very, very much* like *Tristan*."

And Levi did in fact manage this and was able to report it to her at once, the letter reaching her when she was already in Venice. She was highly delighted at this communication, for it was all part of the restoration of good relations with the court and the officials of the Royal Household again at last, for the tension between them was now at an end. It need hardly be said that essentially this was only rendered possible by the change in the personnel of the Royal Household; we may add that Herr von Bürkel was a true friend to Wahnfried and realized that the King's best interests lay far more with Bayreuth than with other and more expensive pleasures, which were at the same time calculated to lead him into alien ways, of a kind likely to estrange him from his people. The significance of this change really lay in the fact that, thanks to the intervention of Frau Cosima, Wagner's own personal circumstances had completely changed, and that he was undoubtedly able to stand upon his own feet again. Frau Cosima would have preferred a more modest way of living, it is true; for, quite apart from financial considerations, it was no light matter for her to travel with a party of ten, which fatigued her extremely. But her nature was such that she was able to meet all demands upon her, and wherever she appeared, she cast a spell, whether in Berlin or Naples, in Venice or Munich.

And now, after spending some beautiful days in Venice, where she met Frau Mimi and discussed many as yet undefined plans for the future, they went to Munich, where quite a different situation awaited them; it was now possible for them to hear the works, not only in the theatre, before the whole public, but also at the private performances in the presence of the King. The Master himself was on most friendly terms with him, for towards him the King was still his old self, with the same boyish, joyful sensitiveness to his truly glorious and divine art and, having recovered from his penchant for the age of Louis XIV and XV, had now returned to him once more. Here, too, it was *Parsifal* that worked the miracle of bringing them together again.

And so Wagner and his family returned to Bayreuth, which received them with autumnal, almost wintry weather, though, in spite of her longing for the south, Frau Cosima felt almost happier there than at the Villa d'Angri and in quiet Siena; for, after all, it was her home.

Their reception was an extraordinarily cordial one. The theatre was festally adorned with flags, and the sun poured down a positively southern warmth upon them. But the cold " Bohemian wind " blew over the Franconian town and awakened a longing for warmer lands, from which Frau Cosima had brought back most beautiful memories, along with others that were painful. Once more the old life began at Wahnfried. In the first place, a great work awaited the Master, which was such that it might have occupied a whole generation. But the artist now lavished upon it his vast reserves of power, for in the composition of *Parsifal* he had given proof of his old, unfailing imagination, now controlled by the might of his technical craftsmanship, which was for ever opening up new paths. He at once set to work, which governed the atmosphere of the household at Wahnfried, and turned the thoughts and feelings of this noble woman into a channel from which nothing was able to divert them. And now began an exacting period. Had she chosen to regard Care in the light of a goddess, she might well have divided her at this time into a whole series of subsidiary personifications of a sinister character, which held sway over her from their dismal Valhalla. But he who was her chief care was also her happiness; for she saw him at work, free and fully master of his powers. Among her memories of Italy two figures stood out in the greatest prominence: Count Gobineau's finely chiselled head, and the sweet face of the Countess Marie. She took an interest in every detail of the ethnologist's works, which, while uplifting her ideas, often disappointed her. But the wonderful interplay of his great personality upon his works and of his works upon his personality filled many an hour at Wahnfried. She realized that in him had appeared a man who, though not possessing such a creative genius as her husband, not only cherished the same great and sublime ideas, but had already revealed them to the world. The influence of these works on Wahnfried should not be underestimated, but neither should it be overestimated. Frau Cosima was able to hold a just balance, and in the acute analysis of his character which she gave at a later date,[1] when the Count was snatched away prematurely by death, she proved that he was one of those who had found the way to Bayreuth and would gladly have settled there permanently had circumstances and his own feelings allowed of this, but whom death had called away to his distant home. How different was the other face upon which she gazed, and which filled her with loving joy! This was her friend Marie, with whom she had been united in such complete sympathy in Venice. Perhaps this, the most beautiful outcome of Frau Cosima's travels, was due, not to the blue sky or the sun of Italy, but to this wonderful woman's blue eyes and their sunny radiance. This is plainly obvious in her very first letter, which, moreover, touched in a beautiful and charming way upon the question which dominated almost the whole of the first half of the following year. This was the destiny of her daughter Daniela. Both at Triebschen and later she had prayed that Daniela might one day bring consolation and peace to her father; and now the moment for this had arrived. Nor did Frau Cosima hesitate to make the sacrifice. But though he to whom it was to be made had a deep and strong affection for his daughter, he was pursuing other paths, in which she could not follow him. In the company from the court theatre, which was then playing in Baden-Baden, he had already seen an artist who first attracted him, not so much by her art, as by a distant but striking resemblance to Frau Cosima. It was Richard Pohl who had taken him to the summer theatre and drawn his attention to this likeness from the first. From this time onwards this artist played a fateful part in his life, their marriage taking place just at the time when his second daughter was married. These facts provide the background for the momentous days which now followed, though these are certainly not to be regarded in any tragic light and reflect no sort of discredit upon Hans von Bülow and his second wife. The ways of the heart are the voice of destiny, whether the heart rejoice or suffer unutterably. At any rate, Hans von Bülow proved his powers as Kapellmeister at Hanover brilliantly, and had he but found peace and not continued to be the restless unhappy being that he always had been, he would undoubtedly have succeeded in making it into a great artistic centre. But the Duke of Meiningen summoned him from the opera-house to his side and placed him at the head of his orchestra, where Hans von Bülow certainly achieved the greatest success possible in such narrow conditions; but, again, it was his own doing that he did not stay there long either; and in assuming responsibility for these great vicissitudes in her first husband's fate, and wrestling and suffering in consequence, Frau Cosima was torturing herself in a way that shows her boundless nobility. But the last great conflict with him was not yet in sight, though Frau Cosima's acute and clairvoyant faculties divined it in advance. She wrote with a certain pleasure to Frau Marie of all their experiences on their way home and afterwards, as well as about Daniela, who was now, so to speak, to play the part of an Iphigenia in Aulis. Her letter runs as follows:

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[1] *Bayreuther Blätter*, November–December 1882: "*Graf Arthur Gobineau. Ein Erinnerungsbild aus Wahnfried.*"—Tr.

"I have written seven letters today, in order to earn the pleasure of a chat with you! You may think this is an odd way of obtaining a quiet mind for something that one loves to do, but I am sure you know, too, how anything one has left undone weighs on one and cumbers one much more than even the most wearisome business, once it is dispatched. But do be very indulgent, as you always have been, both when I am silent and when I break silence, and never doubt that your dear, radiant nature is always near me. We left Venice a month ago, with a fine send-off from the singers and gondoliers, and the pictures of it that rise up in my mind seem to me to belong to a past existence. We carried away a few very fine impressions from Munich, the supreme one for me being that of the Prelude to *Parsifal,* and, after that, a very good performance of *The Mastersingers.*

"Lenbach behaved very well, all the more so since everything connected with Wagner perturbs him violently (*ihn krampfhaft bewegt*). I think he will succeed in making a very fine portrait.[1] — Marie's ill-health agitated him so unspeakably that I was careful not to mention that her life was in danger, as I had heard from Malwida. I also saw K. L.[2] twice in Munich and must give it as my decided opinion that people are unjust to her. She described the second wife in a very calm and kindly way and declared with uncommon energy what tests Wagner's music had survived. Outsiders simply cannot judge what it is that attracts or repels people, and so it is only with the disqualifications of an outsider that I can express an opinion in this matter, but if I were asked to do so, I should say that the Princess Klara makes her fate appear undeserved by the way in which she bears it. I was not surprised by what you told Lulu about your dealings with L., and I am afraid lest, out of his fear of awaking from his dreams, he will estrange all those who might make his life endurable. For the rest, the people with whom we came in contact over our affairs were most reassuring, and this time we found straightforward and understanding people among those who are now in the entourage of the King. Here in Bayreuth, too, we found both home and theatre in the best possible order, thanks to the care of Feustel, who has also thought out an idea which will perhaps make America superfluous. R., too, has set to work on the score, and I am again working with my children and am once more 'in the place where I was from of old (*wo ich von je gewesen*).'[3] But before going on to my own state of mind, I want to round off what I have to say about practical matters by telling you that the director of the theatre at Leipzig[4] was here yesterday, to let us know that H. v. H.[5] has offered him the

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[1] Of Wagner.—Tr.

[2] Princess Klara Liechtenstein.—Tr.

[3] *Tristan and Isolde,* III, i.—Tr.

[4] Neumann.—Tr.

[5] Von Hülsen, Intendant of the Berlin Opera.—Tr.

Opera-house, with orchestra and choir, for four performances of *The Ring,* leaving it open to him to bring his own conductor and singers. My husband is leaving Neumann an entirely free hand, but has promised to be present if the performances take place in the Viktoria-Theater, though he has declined if the alternative plan is adopted. I have no idea how Jewry will decide.

"I tried to do something for Gobineau in Munich through Bernays; *Amadis* will certainly be very hard, for neither the subject nor the form is very attractive. *The Renaissance,* on the other hand, fascinated me extremely, and I have told G. in particular how delighted my husband was with it. The last scene affected me deeply, and I consider that he has rendered all the people in a living and characteristic way, with a consummate knowledge of the conditions of the time and the most delicate and tender insight into suffering (for instance, Machiavelli). Besides this, one follows that changing spirit of the age very clearly and enters into the life of a character (Savonarola) who stands out both by his life and in the memory of man. But you know the book, and so you already know what I would say to you about it. But it is curious that E. W., who most kindly lent it to me, found it dull! — And now I come to a most important practical point, which is so deeply bound up with my most intimate feelings that I choose it as a most charming way of making a transition — your invitation to Lulu. But what can I say? I do not venture to beg you not to let her be a burden in any way, and I scarcely dare to thank you, out of fear that you might feel it a constraint. But I beg you, most beloved Mimi, as you love me — and I am sure that you do — do let me know if your time or your mood, or any other cause whatever, makes any change in your plan appear desirable, and do so without explanation. But let me thank you for having made Lusch so happy by your letter, and now let me come quite close to you and talk about you and myself, as though nothing else in the world existed, and as though writing could communicate my nature to you as well as a look or an embrace. Since there is such friendly personal association between us, and you tell me so kindly that I mean something to you, and even, at times, have something to give you, I should like to reply that you do still far more for me, because there is something in me that you wake to life, so that it brings me happiness. When the radiant joyousness of your good, sweet nature shines out to meet me, it dissolves many constraints, and when you want me to 'tell you something,' I can say it easily. It flows forth to you without effort, and returns to me with new life. Besides, I have a curious sort of feeling where you are concerned, as though, countless ages ago, in some other world, I had been either an elder sister or an old aunt of yours, so that you know and possess many things in me which I have no need to express in this life. Believe me, if I received a painful blow in the years that are past, it was because this proud illusion had begun to fade away. Now accept my greetings, charged with the feeling of all this, and if by chance you are by way of telling secrets, tell me how it is you manage to become younger and more beautiful all the time. I still see you as you put your head into the room on the last day, absolutely bringing light and warmth and joy into the room."

Life went on at Wahnfried, and while everything culminated in the instrumentation of *Parsifal*, and every day brought forth something new and great, the impressions that came from the outside world caused no depression, though just at this time Ramann's biography of Liszt was beginning to appear, a book whose character we have sufficiently indicated in our account of Frau Cosima's mother. I might be even more severe in my judgment. The worthy old Ramann absolutely reminds one of a metal-worker who has been taken prisoner and forced to coin false money in his cell. The Princess Wittgenstein was the mistress and supplied the metal, and the metal was genuine, though the die with which it was stamped was false; so we may imagine what an impression this book produced at Wahnfried. A certain antagonism appeared, like that which existed between Monsalvat and Klingsor's magic castle, before any magic garden had been called into existence, so that nothing existed there but a haunt of sorcery. It looks as though the sinister Princess now exerted fresh influence over Franz Liszt through this book. But what did all this matter in comparison with the spirit of Wahnfried, whose noble mistress brushed such matters aside? Her greatness consists in the very fact that, when faced with such manœuvres, which were unworthy in their origin and unworthy in their execution, she never lost her calm or dignity. This is clearly evident from her letters to Mimi at this time, which reveal a great mind and are the expression of a great soul. The tragedy which begins to be apparent in them now is that at the same time her relations with her father were marked by a certain tension, and that she did not meet with the slightest help from him in the hard struggle with which she was threatened on the part of Hans von Bülow over her child, not owing to any ill will of Bülow's, but as a result of his excessive irritability, of which he was fully aware and repented in calm moments. We see Frau Cosima here like some lady of the *ancien régime*, yet at the same time as a great daughter of our modern age, and we must emphasize the fact that here we reach a fresh climax in this great life, which has flowed on its way peaceful and strong as the sea, yet stormy and agitated as that mighty element. On the day after her birthday had been most beautifully celebrated at Wahnfried, she wrote to Marie von Schleinitz as follows:

"I wanted to give myself a special treat on my birthday by writing to you, my most beloved Mimi. But my head is like Ilsebill in the fairy-tale, it 'will not do as I want it to (*er will nicht, als ich wohl will*),' and after dinner I had to go to bed. But my thoughts were with you and your sunny nature, and I used your being and existence as proofs of an idea which quite absorbs my mind at present — that is, the justice of life. I should not expound it to anyone whom I saw crushed beneath a burden, but as I look at your life, especially at present, I do so with delight; we do get what we want, partially and after the endless delays often involved by the obscurity of this will (not desire), which is entirely unconscious on our part — but we do get it. And even though the lives of the greatest men seem to give the lie to this idea of justice upon earth, I get over that by the thought that the immanent Will had to express something exceptional in their lives. In Giordano Bruno it cared little about his doctrine, but very much for martyrdom in itself, in Cervantes it cared greatly for that noble serenity which was the only thing to which the writer bade farewell, hoping to meet it again in heaven, and which, in connexion with such a fate as his, is as sublime and moving as the ecstatic glance of the martyr; in Michelangelo it was bent more upon the manifestation of a character than the finish of his works, in Wagner it was bent upon both character and work. Perhaps these are all sophistries and, at any rate, no more than a sport of my brooding mind. But this sport is always going on in me, and I follow it out in my own joys and sorrows and in the lives of those whom I know, and I am for ever returning to my favourite and most lovable example — to you. I know that you are happy and consider that, in this, life is just. I am glad and proud to send you Lulu, she will tell you all our Wahnfriedianisms (*Wahnfriedlichkeiten*), which are even nicer by word of mouth than in writing. But do not let her be a nuisance to you or yours! While she can learn at home how to forget the world without ever missing it, through you she will learn what is far more important on one's entry into life: how to bear oneself in it and endure it, how to combine truth with charm, enthusiasm with patience, and how to meet the wear and tear resulting from constant distractions triumphantly by a constant sincerity of feeling and disposition. Such, in my eyes, is the value to her of her visit to you. To me this fresh proof of your love for us is touchingly welcome, for it is a pleasure to Richard and sets his mind at rest. Accept my thanks and be indulgent. Daniela brings you all the love — not to say deference — that is your due, and in which she is never failing towards me. Do not let it be a trouble to you to assume my functions and advise her to do or not to do things. She also possesses the inestimable good fortune of obedience, of biddableness and unconditional submissiveness in things in which we, alas! have to decide, to counsel, and to exercise a little restraint. And if I ask myself why my youth, which was so little favoured in material respects, appears to me to have been so happy, I think the reason is that I was so exceptionally ready to obey and so full of passionate veneration. This feeling, which governed my demeanour towards the Princess K[arolyne], still persists in me — or, at least, a certain nuance of it does — and I think of the end of her life with sympathy, though here, again, I cannot fail to realize its justice. I knew of her project of the convent from him who is best acquainted with her, and Gobineau told me in Venice about the incredible letters that she had written to him and the Countess La Tour, besides which I heard that she had written similar letters to the Baroness T., F. Helbig, and others — she is really harder to deal with (*eine derber*) than the other, St. Catherine of Siena. But only think, this trait, uncomfortable though it may be, is the quality of hers that pleases me most. It is like the dæmon that drew Napoleon on into Russia — I beg pardon for this comparison, which occurred to me in solitude — an imperious longing to make life impossible for herself, which, on the whole, promises better, when accompanied by actions which I find it hard to describe, than comfort and pleasure. Thanks to her daughter's good marriage and admirably correct bearing, she could have had a very pleasant social position, in addition to her relations with my father, who is faithful to her after his fashion. But her Napoleonic dæmon leaves her no peace, and her turbulence and indiscretion ruin everything for her. In addition to this, she takes her stand upon the reality of the world, she is indignant when anyone dares to say that life is a dream, and, like St. Thomas, reckons prudence among the cardinal virtues. But I see clearly through this incoherent jumble (*reichhaltige Pfuscherei*), and I find that here, too, the will of man is his kingdom upon earth, and his heaven and hell as well. As to what you say about Lenbach, I think I can guess what it means, and I cannot say that you are wrong; but perhaps the feeling that we assume to exist in him is rather a sort of professional feeling than a purely personal one, just as painting might rise up in revolt against music, because the latter interferes with its quiet operation. The Apollonians versus the Dionysians! To this is added his incapacity for following the 'Master' in his philosophy, besides the fact that his soul is utterly insensible to music, and, last of all, the touching simplicity of a man of the people and a tendency towards moderation in the emotional life, which means that all that goes out spontaneously towards the other being[1] and is received by him with equal simplicity is regarded by Lenbach as a sort of mania for sacrifice, accepted, if not demanded, by an egoism which amounts to mania. None the less his verbal outbursts will always be as unfortunate as his conduct will be good, for right action is more natural to this rare nature than right thinking and speaking, since his observation is as fine as his vision is defective. It would be a splendid work for a woman to open up the other view of life to him through love and to charm away the abrupt and repellent element in his nature, which is not an essential part of it. But how many more reincarnations will this require? He has an ideal, which cannot survive as such on reflection, and he has had a real experience that has vanished, besides which he possesses one faculty — the binding force of fidelity. What more is left of him but his work, with a spice of bitterness in it?

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[1] Wagner. — Tr.

"Had I not understood all these things in such a light, I should indeed have had some painful hours in Munich. But in the end everything turned out well, thus confirming my pet superstition, that if one is at once resolute and self-abnegating, everything is a success, and even the most recalcitrant element becomes pliant. But, for all our negotiations, we met with no success, and since it was already settled that if the performances were to take place in the Opera-house, my husband would not come to Berlin, he received the following telegram,[1] of which you have perhaps not heard yourself: 'Honoured Master, do the performances in common with Director Neumann give me the right to conduct *The Valkyrie* in the Royal Opera-house? Reply paid.' No reply was vouchsafed, and so Neumann's attempt to come to terms with idiocy was also in vain; for there is no doing anything with it, neither violent nor peaceful methods are any use — or even possible — it remains sublimely pleased with itself (*selig*). I confess I am rather trembling at the thought of the Capitol — I mean the Viktoria-Theater — and I wish it was not necessary for us to be present among all that splendour; but one must just echo Karl Weber's saying and exclaim: 'As God wills!' My husband was very, very glad that you told Feustel you were in favour of its taking place in the Viktoria-Theater. 'She is staunch!' he cried on hearing it. And since I have begun telling tales, I will say that Math[ilde] Maier is quite touched at your letter; you have done a good work, for her existence is a very troubled one, and the fact that she is always recommending me one Kmeister — a tenor with a wife — in and out of season, does not prevent her from being extraordinarily good, capable, clever, and full of soul.

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[1] From von Hülsen. See Glasenapp, VI, 416.—Tr.

" A thousand thanks for *Irmela.* I have only just been able to start it, but can already see that I am going to like it. During the evenings we have been reading Cervantes's *Exemplary Tales* (*Novelas Ejemplares*) with great delight — that is, two out of the three that we have gone through so far, for there was one picaresque tale (*tückische Geschichte*) that we did not finish, but the others enchanted us. You will find in them grace, wit, the most profound insight into the essential nature of things, under a disguise of kindliness, extraordinary art in the narrative, and naïveté. One is reminded of slender Renaissance columns, of the figures in the Bargello at Florence, of joy, goodness, and grace, as though these were appointed in advance for mankind in all circumstances. The writer endows them with these qualities, and there they are for our eternal enjoyment. *The Renaissance, Amadis,* Gobineau — how much I could still find to say, but I am horrified at myself, Lulu will develop the theme of R. L. with you, for she too is fond of him. . . .

" But I really must add that your dear greetings arrived just as we were at table, while my husband was proposing my health. Just as you stand by yourself in my life, apart from all other friendships, so your greetings arrived by themselves at the right moment, the rest coming, some earlier, the rest towards evening, so that you were associated with our sacred little circle, and I hailed this coincidence, which was eloquent to me of the bond between us. Accept my thanks, a thousand times over! My husband sends you his greetings and always remembers you with pleasure, all the children send their wishes, and I embrace you! May your fortune, your beauty, and your goodness be full of blessings to you! "

And so the new year opened. As we have said, the next business to be considered was that of handing over her daughter to the charge of Frau von Schleinitz and having her presented in

Berlin society by this lady, who was one of its leaders. There is a peculiar charm about this contact between Wahnfried and what we may call the court circles of Berlin, and Frau von Schleinitz, with her ever cheerful and kindly, though serious and energetic nature, had assumed a task that afforded her peculiar satisfaction. For she might well say of her adopted daughter: "*Nicht kommt sie aus Nacht und Elend, aus Glanz und Wonne kommt sie her* (No darksome fate did [she] inherit; from light and joy to thee [she] came." [1] And so Daniela played a most charming part on the stage of the German world, which might perhaps have developed in an even more beautiful and happy way but for one thing which was now bound to happen — her meeting with her father. It was not Liszt, however, who handled the situation with such abruptness; this came about under the dæmonic influence of the ill-omened lady in Rome. But all that could be done to counteract these influences Frau Mimi did, thus revealing the fact that her house and *salon* were in the closest connexion with Wahnfried. Not only were the mistresses of the two houses worthy of each other, but they also shared the same sentiments. This aspect of the subject merits a far more lengthy development, but this could not be provided without giving a full account of the personality of Frau von Schleinitz. One of the most affecting moments which I have experienced in the course of my work upon this biography occurred when Frau Cosima asked in my presence whether a worthy memorial was being raised to her friend Marie von Schleinitz. In the year 1912 she had herself caused the faithful Wolzogen to write an obituary notice of her deceased friend, and had communicated her ideas to him. She now begged her daughter to read this notice out to her, in order to provide material for a more extensive and complete appreciation of this wonderful woman, who far outshone all others in Berlin at the time. It is wonderful how clearly this old lady of ninety recalled their friendship, always with a sentiment of what may be called creative justice; and the beauty of this incident lay in the fact that her remarks were addressed to the daughter who had spent four months under the protection of this rare woman, with her unfailingly sunny temper; for it was the sunshine in Marie von Schleinitz's nature that particularly attracted her, and she was unaware that a radiance no less warm and golden emanated from herself as well. But she hailed the other as a sister, and they were in a sense twin luminaries. Their correspondence during the period which followed is influenced by this sentiment, which made her gratitude particularly charming; for life at Bayreuth flowed on like an orchestral piece powerfully developing its allotted theme. She could lay aside the baton and take up her pen, and this is what she did, especially in her letters to her friend in Berlin, but also in an open letter to and about Herr von Hülsen, the Intendant of the Berlin Opera-house.[1] For it so happened that after having come to an agreement with Neumann and thrown open the doors of the Opera-house to the redoubtable impresario of *The Ring*, he had executed a curious *volte-face,* such as he alone was capable of, thus making Wagner, in a sense, the servant of the court theatre. He had telegraphed: " Reply paid " — in itself a characteristic piece of ill-breeding, of which no gentleman would have been guilty — and Wagner made no reply. This is how it happened that the Imperial Theatre in Berlin was debarred from producing *The Ring* for the first time in the capital, and the Intendant could once more retire to the apartment in the Palace in which the undesirable hangers-on of the court played cards. But, whether deserved or undeserved, the open letter now appeared — one of the finest pronouncements ever issued from the house of Wahnfried, composed by Frau Cosima in a night under the influence of the developments in Berlin and written out in the morning. Once more the Master's wife became his Brünhilde, his " shield-maid (*Schildmaid*)," and the Intendant had once more to withdraw into his functions as a courtier. Such was the prelude to these days at Berlin, during which the Master had, as a matter of fact, to be present. All preparations were now being made for these great events,[2] in which the names of Wagner, Liszt, and Bülow appeared, not side by side, but one after the other. Frau Cosima's letters show us the manner of her appearance in Berlin at her husband's side, for, both as mistress of Wahnfried and on her own merits, she occupied a commanding position beside Frau von Schleinitz, the minister's wife, confronting all cabals and those by whom they were hatched, alike in Bayreuth and in Berlin. A letter from her to Frau von Schleinitz runs as follows:

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[1] *Lohengrin*, III, i, F. Jameson's translation (Schott).—Tr.

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[1] Published in *Bayreuther Blätter*, February–March 1881. — Tr.

[2] The Liszt Festival in Berlin. — Tr.

"You may tell, my beloved Mimi, what thoughts and feelings are awakened in us by your birthday from the fact that we are entrusting a joint production of ours to you, who through joy and sorrow, weal and woe, 'through rapture and wounds (*durch Wonnen und Wunden*),'[1] have accompanied us with your love and life. My modest share in it, that of listener and writer, I joyfully lay in your hand as a sign of my holy pride in the fact that this life was permitted to be confided to my care. Accept this gift from us, dearest, for you are the meetest to possess it, and regard yourself as a most noble part of the existence which we so gladly give into your charge!

"Please do not consider it out of place if I append a few words about Daniela to my birthday greetings. They cannot but be words of gratitude. She writes that everybody is excessively kind to her, and that she knows whom she has to thank for this. We are greatly touched by the fact that your husband, the Count, treats the child with the same kindness as you do; and I must tell you a naïve little saying of hers in one of her recent letters, in which she wrote that if she were to find a husband with half so much kindness, intelligence, and dignity as your husband, she would think herself the happiest woman in the world. And it is almost as though she had a presentiment that even this half is not to be found.

"I hope that her presence will continue to be pleasing to you, and that you may not be worried by the circumstances[2] which would have deterred me from soliciting the happiness of having her received into your house, since these appear to me almost inevitable, from both the natural and the social point of view. The possibility that you may be caused even the shadow of an annoyance weighs on my mind, whereas I am entirely free from anxiety on my child's account, for I know her to be cheerful and contented in your house, and in a glorious state of high spirits.

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[1] *Tristan and Isolde*, III, i.—Tr.

[2] Bülow's presence in Berlin and its implications.—Tr.

" And now accept our greetings and thanks! The latter is an old story as coming from us to you, but it is a beautiful thing that it is old, and I would not on any account be without the experiences we have shared with you, not even for the joy of seeing you for the first time and realizing what you are. On this day on which you were born to us, I embrace you with double fervour and piety! . . .

" It is now a month since you spread your protecting wing over my child, and I am able to tell myself that all the germs which I hope I have implanted in her are developing beautifully and happily. Whatever lot the Fates may have in store for this being, whom I believe to be an uncommon one, her visit to you will be a most precious memory, through which her destiny will reach its consummation. But I know, too, that you will not regret the shrewd and courageous kindliness which you are lavishing on behalf of her in her relations with the world. For your deep and loving comprehension of her nature tells that what you are doing is no wasted labour, but one of momentous importance for her moral development. And since you insist on thanking us for the opportunity of doing it, it must at least be Richard who receives your thanks; for we were, are, and always shall be faced with difficulties, and I have a certain narrowness of sympathies — unworthy of a genius, if you will — that always makes me timid towards everything and everybody. But I can thank you for the way in which you face the difficulties and endure them, and I do so with my whole soul. . . . However that may be, she is happy with you and has the pleasure of learning to know at close quarters a being as invaluable and incomparable as yourself, your husband, the Count (of whom she writes that, like a lofty tree, he affords peace, shade, and secure protection), and of being treated kindly by him, and that means so much that this unforeseen good fortune gives me some reassurance for her future life — though her dispostion is such that she is not easy to make provision for, and her situation does not make matters easier. Levi has much to say about the two musical evenings, and especially about your playing, which impressed him. I am glad that he found favour in your eyes, for I consider him a most excellent person, with real delicacy of feeling."

And later on she writes: "Forgive me, my only Mimi, if I thank you with rather a trembling hand. I am up today, it is true, but I am still rather giddy, and I am afraid that my three missives to Daniela yesterday bore rather too much resemblance to the state in which they were written. But I hope that she understood me.

"Once again, most beloved Mimi, you have achieved what I myself was never capable of doing — though perhaps I was not in a position to do so. Must I confess that the only thing which agitates me in this connexion — and that almost violently — is my anxiety that Daniela should bear herself well. I do not know whether it is due to any lack of tenderness in me, but, really, the only anxiety that I feel about my children is lest they should not meet the vexations of life with a sufficiently proud composure. As for these vexations themselves, good God, they are the air we breathe, and it has never been my way to make a great outcry about them. The one thing for which I have passionately longed is the knowledge that my children are of the same mind as I am about this. Should I have the trial of seeing them bear the painful events of life without dignity or greatness of soul, but with the violence of common people, I admit, my incomparable friend, that this would be the hardest thing in my life, and as I think about it today, I ask myself apprehensively whether and how I should survive it. As for Daniela's bearing, the only thing — literally the only thing — that matters to me is that it might appear as if I were completely impartial as regards her fate. I am certainly nothing of the sort, but when all sorts of things are going on at the same time, one thing affects me so violently that no more room is left for the other. I understand P. perfectly well. My husband — you know him — says that if this be so, he really is not attracted by her. I think otherwise and take it to mean that he wants to test both D. and himself. But what captivates me is your account of your troubles. You are far more of a mother than I am, and it is you who are supporting my child in this, her first serious struggle. How shall I find words to tell you what I feel? At the end of your dear letter, my incomparable Mimi, I read something about admiration, and since, in my eyes, you are right about everything, I just 'let it be so (*lass ich's denn so sein*).' But what am I to say to you? Not only about your goodness to my child, but also about the way in which you constantly exert your intellectual ability and qualities of character, thus making it possible to deal so advantageously with a situation which must, from every point of view, be characterized as a critical one? Indeed, if it has proved possible for Daniela to place no obstacles in the way of your loving solicitude by her attitude or bearing, it is thanks to nobody but you. Her good qualities have been able to blossom in your presence, fostered by the atmosphere that you have created for her. We know what it means when a melody is sustained by the whole orchestra, or when, as often happens in vain in Italian music, it introduces a little nobility, beauty, and passion! Just so do I see Lusch's form walking about the white drawing-room, and as I watch her, I perceive a whole Wagnerian orchestration of goodness, love, and intelligence, a polyphony fraught with significance, which lends the simple young figure grace and meaning. Incapable as I am of ever requiting what you are doing for her, my realization of it would absolutely overwhelm me if I did not feel gratitude to be the most beneficent of sentiments even in love. To experience it in friendship has been granted to me only in my relations with you, and for this, too, I thank you! And now God's will be done! Beneath your protection all will go well, and I am only glad if my poor words do not spoil your actions in your own eyes!

Wer guter Tat sich freut,
Ihm sei das Mahl erneut:
Der Labung darf er nah'n,
Die hehr'ste Gab' empfah'n.

(For him whose heart is true
The feast is spread anew.
The cup he now may drain
And healing win again.)[1]

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[1] *Parsifal*, Scene I.—Tr.

"In these words do I salute you, most beloved Mimi! The mystic meal, the soul's refreshment, will for ever be renewed for you, the sublimest gifts will prove to be yours, since you have succeeded in solving an almost insoluble problem and vanquishing the world in the world." And further on she says: "It is a week, my most beloved Mimi, since we wound up our strange visit to Berlin with the most pleasant evening of all, and I simply must tell you how we recall its Wahnfriedian atmosphere. I am particularly in the mood to tell you this today, for we have just congratulated Siegfried upon his twelfth birthday and congratulated ourselves upon him and upon the idyllic existence into which our life has been permitted to develop amidst it all, in spite of it all, and as the result of it all. Amid the raging forces of nature, I mean, islands are occasionally formed which offer a fruitful sojourn over and over again to many a shipwrecked mariner; when I look back today upon Triebschen twelve years ago, our life seems to me not unlike these islands, and now that we are able to give others a share in it, it seems to me blessed and fruitful. But I cannot but give thanks! Daniela has again taken up her old routine, amiably serene, harmoniously animated, and I look forward to approaching events with the confidence that has been the mainstay of my existence. Sorely as I suffered in my early youth, without ever losing my feeling of happiness, a picture which made the deepest impression upon me as a child has always appeared to me to be strikingly symbolic of a life's mission attained — I mean the one of those martyrs who, whether in boiling oil or amid frost and ice, saw the heavens open and during their very torments enjoyed what it was granted them to see there. To descend to an infinitely lower plane, which cannot even be mentioned in the same breath as the sublime destiny of martyrdom — it seems to me that anyone who has been granted the faculty of reflection can never have his happiness entirely clouded, and that, whether in frost or in fire, in weariness or in lingering death, his inward eye is always fixed upon this joy, even when his vision of the world outside him is dimmed with tears. But to him whom the race of life has not helped to acquire this faculty, death should be vouchsafed above all things."

It was, indeed, with very strange sentiments that Frau Cosima witnessed the performances in Berlin. The feeling that predominated in her at first was that here was a lonely grave, hitherto the only one on German soil that held one of those dearest to her. It is touching to read how she speaks of her brother Daniel and how she associates his nature and character, his existence and his death, with all that lent her life its highest worth. Thus when she heard her husband playing *Tristan* once more, she writes: "I remember how I learnt to know *Tristan* while my brother was lying mortally ill in my house, breathing in the music at the same time as I did." And now all the memories of the days in Berlin rose up before her. The beloved Master's irritability was beginning to gain upon him every day as a result of his prodigious agitation, but also of incipient old age and the state of health caused by it, and she now thought of her first husband and of his deep-seated nervousness. But she was able to correct this tendency in her husband, and nothing could be more characteristic of them both than what she says about this excitability of his, which has incurred such blame: "I see more and more plainly that if at times R. says things that are very wounding and offensive, he always does so innocently, and, by a dæmonic instinct, goes straight to the point. It is the fact that one is defenceless against it that makes one feel so uncomfortable."

But her position with regard to her first husband had now to be cleared up, and in this matter the Master undoubtedly acted in accordance with a perfectly just and noble sentiment. He explained to his wife and Bülow, clearly and without reserve, that he wanted to adopt all the children of the first marriage, thus not only assuming the whole care of them, but also preventing a break in the children's lives. If the Master is to be looked upon as an egoist, his egoism can only be regarded as grand and positively sublime in character. But he now met with the most stubborn resistance from Hans von Bülow, and it proved impossible for him to gain his point, so that another solution had, in fact, to be found, not on material grounds, but because these personal complications weighed very heavily upon Frau Cosima. He could neither live nor work without having her near him. Every hour when she was out of the house he spent wandering about the rooms like a soul in torment. Every day he told her how absolutely necessary she was to him, often in the most extravagant terms: " If you think," he once exclaimed, " that I can write a single bar without thinking of you and your catholic eyes (*katholischen Augen*), may the curse of the uttermost hell rest upon you." There was no end to his boyishness, whether in work or in love, but the same was true of his relations with Hans, though he always behaved like a man of honour to him. The discussions about Hans agitated Frau Cosima, and so she made it her habit to keep silence when Wagner held forth upon the subject. And this was the right thing to do; for the figure of Hans disturbed the new springtime of love which was bringing Wagner such rapture, and once while she was brooding darkly over how things were to develop, he came to her beaming with delight and offered her the first snowdrops, which he had found in the garden. Everything in him had undergone a change. While they were chatting together, he recalled a saying of Balzac's: " *La femme de trente ans commence à quarante ans* (The ' Woman of Thirty ' starts at forty)," remarked that no Frenchwoman had ever aroused any interest in him, and inquired where these interesting women of Balzac's were to be found. But even among the women of other nations whom he enumerated he found few who reminded him of these interesting figures. While they were playing whist, he recalled an excursion at Magdeburg, from which he had returned to his lady-love quite drunk, upon which Frau Cosima comments: " How extraordinarily he bubbled over with humour today! He said it was because he did not want to make me talk, because of my cough. His good humour and jests extended to Hans, who he said was unendurable, which, depressed as I was about him, helped me to become very cheerful."

As an artist, too, he characterized the alteration made by Bülow in Karl Maria von Weber's *Invitation to the Valse* as a piece of impertinence (*naseweis*), not out of spite, but as though Bülow had been present, just in the way he used to do at the time when Hans had come to him at Zürich.

How charming, too, were the games of which Frau Cosima was the centre, when the children made a ring round her and asked her a riddle: "What is it that is silver in front and gold behind?" they asked, triumphantly answering: "Mamma," for her hair was half golden and half white. Next came Easter and the confirmation of the two younger daughters. Ill as he was, the Master could not be dissuaded from following his wife and children to church, and she writes that he arrived after the sermon for the sacred ceremony. "He, too, was deeply affected, and told me that he had drawn great hope from it: the clergyman, he said, had nothing to do with it; his black robes symbolized in his eyes separation from ordinary life, and he rejoiced to see our solemn emotion. He said he would like to have Levi baptized, so as to have no Jew present at the communion.[1] In the evenings he plays me extracts from *Parsifal*."

And so their visit to Berlin drew nearer, though it was accompanied by a certain amount of vexation, when Frau Cosima heard from Daniela that Liszt was to leave on the day of their arrival. This was too much for the Master, and she writes: "R. broods over this. He is writing to my father with the utmost frankness! I said that I would not write the letter if I were he. He kept it back, but then asked me for it again and sent it off! It makes him so angry that Father should have passed us *en route*. He was getting excited about it all the evening, but without violence, for there was nobody contradicting him." But his old resentment against Liszt, to which he had given expression from a distance in the old days in Paris when Liszt was a virtuoso, once more showed itself, and on receiving a beautiful letter from the King, which put him into an extraordinarily good temper, he could not refrain from saying "if we had not had the King on our side, my father would have left us in the lurch."

And so April 25 came round, when the Master handed to Frau Cosima all the sketches for the first act — a sign that the instrumentation of it was complete, so that another big step forward had been taken. Frau Cosima was delighted above all things and gave thanks to him and to Heaven; so now they could start with an easy mind for Berlin, where Daniela met them at the station, though she had sad news to tell them about her grandfather, and her father too; for before the arrival of Wagner and his wife a regular Liszt festival had been arranged, which naturally found an echo in Frau von Schleinitz's *salon* too. But besides this there had been an evening concert of Hans von Bülow's, at which the meeting took place between him and his daughter. It was a deeply affecting occasion, upon which he wrote the well-known letter to Frau Cosima, the tone of which was, however, contradicted by his violence towards his daughter — a violence due to his love for her. The letter ran as follows: " Once again, Madame, I thank you upon my knees. What an adorable child! I cannot but weep when I think of her, and I think of her without ceasing. This April 27 has filled me with exaltation. I thank Providence for having reserved me this ineffable joy, this happiness, the sweetness of which is so great that all the misfortune, all the regret, all the reproaches that mingle with it are powerless to trouble it. Tell me, great one, magnanimous one, great-souled and noble woman, what duties may it be mine to discharge towards this beloved being, who won my soul completely in a single instant! I could build a chapel on the spot where your father presented her to me. I can understand the Père Goriot. Forgive me, I am rambling — for what is madness in that book would be no more than Daniela's barest right, a divine fanaticism. Thanks, thanks, thanks! I have to thank you for an incomparable happiness, utterly melancholy though it may be."

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[1] The communion scene in *Parsifal*, which Levi was to conduct.

Here we have, indeed, the great-hearted and magnanimous Bülow; but he could not master his feelings. He had left Berlin, and now began the memorable days of the first performances of *The Ring*, which found an echo not only in the musical history of Berlin, but in its *chronique scandaleuse*, for, since nothing could be found in the work to which exception could be taken, people tried to vilify the Master and abuse him personally. For instance, when, out of a feeling which was in some sort justifiable, he declined to comply with a summons from the Crown Prince after the prodigious fatigues of one of the performances and excused himself in terms entirely in keeping with the usages of the court, this caused such a violent sensation in the Berlin of that day that he received anonymous letters for not waiting upon the Crown Prince. Times change, but men remain essentially the same, whether they have to do homage to a court or to some other power. They don servile garb the moment it is offered them.

At the end of the first performance of *The Ring*, during *The Twilight of the Gods*, Frau Cosima's impressions of the work were great and overwhelming, and she gives a moving description of how they listened to it together: " In spite of all the defects of the performance, Richard and I were affected by it, during Brünhilde's last words we were simply clinging to each other, my head resting on his arm, and Richard exclaimed to me: ' What things we go through together! ' He went up on the stage and made his speech."

Then they went home, where a visit from a dear friend awaited them — the Count Gobineau, who had arrived during their absence and had not responded to their invitation to attend the performances in Berlin, but had felt comfortable with the children at Wahnfried and spent happy days of meditation there. As he passed the days in the rooms occupied by that mighty intellect, he gradually began to comprehend its full greatness. It was chiefly on his account that Wagner and his wife returned home, and they spent beautiful and stimulating days with him, which were indeed unforgettable. Frau Cosima herself has told us about them, and her memoir of Count Gobineau will remain an everlasting memorial of these beautiful days, so full of solemn emotion. Then they started out for Berlin once more, to be present at the last cycle.

It was after their return that the great and gloomy event which cast its shadow over the whole summer began to produce an effect upon her from afar — her meeting with Hans von Bülow. Siegfried's birthday was of course celebrated, May 22 having already gone off delightfully, thanks to a dramatic performance, for which Frau Cosima had again made all the preparations, placing both her prose and her beauty at the service of the day in the most splendid fashion. I will not repeat what has already been told in a fine and exhaustive fashion.[1] It was her way to solemnize this day by a festivity not only for him, but for the world as well. But on Siegfried's birthday she wrote in her diary the following expressive words: "Siegfried! Child of joy! Child of peace!" She comforted herself by recalling the stirring moments of the past, writing, for instance, on the 12th: "In the evening we were recalling memories of Switzerland, of the fine days there, and afterwards of the floods too. Richard compared me to Sieglinde, when she cries: '*Weiter! Weiter!* (Farther! Farther!)'[1] When we were by ourselves, we fell to talking about the relations between us. 'Tristan and Isolde,' said Richard. I asked him whether we ought not to destroy our correspondence, for we might perhaps die before Siegfried was mature enough. Richard replied: 'Not yet, but perhaps later. For there is not a trace in it of any relation such as that between Goethe and Frau von Stein, in which everything was lacerating to the feelings (*blutig*).'" And it is fortunate that these letters have been preserved. But it was useless for Frau Cosima to try to evade the conflict which threatened her by means of such ideas, for she received letter after letter from Daniela,[2] full of grief and dejection, and Bülow sent word to her through the child that he wished to see her; to which she replied: "It has upset Richard, but, in my opinion, it would be better for the children if I complied with this wish." Wagner gradually reconciled himself to the idea, for he felt that he could not interfere in the matter without wounding his wife's noble feelings, and so he consented. The meeting was not to take place at Weimar, as originally arranged, but at Nuremberg, where, after eleven years, she met Hans von Bülow once more. The sight of him moved her very deeply, as we can see from her words, simple and practical though these were. After mature deliberation she concludes the account in her diary by saying that her place was at Wahnfried, and there, and nowhere else, was where duty called her. It should not be forgotten that before Bülow went to Nuremberg, he had arranged that the lady who was to be his second wife should be invited to play at Hanover, and had sounded Meiningen about an engagement for her. Frau Cosima's account is as follows: "Richard called me at eight o'clock, I made haste, and he and Siegfried escorted me to the station. Our parting! How well I realize that we simply must die together! The journey passed by like a dream, with a dreamy pleasure in the singing of the larks and in the villages through which I passed. At one o'clock Lusch met me at the station — very, very good, the poor, dear child! — with a sad account of the state of her father's health. At two o'clock she left me. The desolate little orphan! Who could possibly be happy — or, indeed, want to be? From four to half past seven Hans was with me; I attempted to restrain his violent surges of emotion and to overcome his injustice towards Daniela. An impossible task! He requested me to stay for the next morning too, for he had not made the proposal that he meant to make me in the way he had wished. I conceded this. We spent the evening in the company of a third person, animated, but so melancholy!" On the next day she continues: "A strange night. Richard's telegram was dreadfully sad reading: '*Was könntest Du wehren, elendes Weib?* (What helps now thy weakness, woefullest wife?'[1] Our second interview. Hans said that he could not tell white from black, or black from white. He has no star to guide him now, and he was seized with a nervous twitching. We said good-bye to each other! I went to fetch Daniela and would have liked to have another talk with her, but he did not wish it. I returned home thankfully, though in tears, and arrived in my harbour of refuge; Richard was happy to have us home again. He described how he had arranged a whist party for yesterday evening, but had been in a scandalously bad temper. All that I had to tell him was sad, yet the feeling of home descended upon us, and we were able to talk about it without violent scenes. But one thing is clear to us, that I can only exist with him and the children, and that all association with strangers, or even with friends, is a trial and a wrong! After this meeting I set foot in our house once again with the feeling that a new life was beginning for me — desolate, yet peaceful, happy in his happiness alone, but bearing deep in my heart the consciousness of an inexpiable wrong. May God help me to enjoy the one without ever forgetting the other. In Lusch's honour Richard played Kurwenal's theme, '*auf eigener Waid und Wonne* (The land that nurtured thee, the land of thy delight),[1] while for me he tenderly and jestingly recalled the end of the *Swiss Family Robinson:* 'I have him once more.' Kurwenal's melody characterizes for me my sentiments at Wahnfried: sorrow and distress on all sides, affliction in the innermost depths of my soul, yet with the possibility of recovery, though here alone and exclusively among my dear ones."

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[1] In Glasenapp, VI, 474 et seq. — Tr.

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[1] *The Valkyrie*, II, iii.—Tr.

[2] From Berlin, where she spent June and July with Bülow.—Tr.

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[1] *Twilight of the Gods*, I, iii, Newman's translation (Breitkopf and Härtel). —Tr.

The conflict in Frau Cosima's breast was not so much between two contrasting impulses as between two absolutely different worlds, and if, thanks to her unbounded sense of justice — which, be it said, she exerted against herself alone — her judgment of Hans von Bülow was tempered, not only with sympathy and interest, but also with a far higher degree of justice than was necessary, this was beyond her power to prevent. Moreover, she was deeply moved by the recently published letters from George Sand to her mother, which Daniela had brought her and which caused her to see her position with regard to Hans in a different light from that in which the Master quite justifiably regarded it. The tragedy of the situation lay principally in the fact that, owing to Richard Wagner's greatness, it had been impossible to settle the great conflict about Cosima in the way usual between men of honour — by a duel. This would certainly have been the best thing and might have brought some sort of peace, at least to the minds of the men. And so, now that Bülow was contemplating decisive steps, and any personal relations between him and Cosima must now be completely severed, his resentment against Wagner was aggravated, and showed itself in many ways which were at variance with his usually magnanimous view of life. Wagner was to a certain extent right in saying: "It was possible to help me, but impossible to help him"; to which she replied "that it was in this connexion that I felt so plainly the tragedy of life and the inexpiable guilt of existence — that is, my own guilt. For Hans was better equipped than anybody else to be Richard's follower, and also stood more in need of guidance than anybody else; then I came between them;

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[1] *Tristan and Isolde*, III, i.—Tr.

how one always deludes oneself about sin! And when Richard said to me: 'Your transgression was a beneficent folly (*ein guter Wahn*),' that does enable me, it is true, to look him in the face serenely and peacefully, but never to deceive myself about the calamity of my birth." There can be no question that during these days this unique woman's great and lofty mind is like the radiance emanating from some being on a superior plane.

But Bayreuth was astir and had been for some long time past. Shortly after their return Levi had arrived to make the necessary arrangements for the chorus. It was the spirit of the age, not any feelings or ideas on the part of the mistress of Wahnfried and her husband, that was responsible for a certain friction coming from without that arose in this connexion; for at this very moment, when Levi was adapting himself like a disciple to the spirit of Wahnfried — which was inseparable from the figure of Jesus of Nazareth — a spiteful anonymous letter which reached him from the outer world could not but be doubly wounding. She tried to calm him in womanly fashion by her personal intervention, and her efforts were seconded by a clear and outspoken letter from the Master, which made it not only possible, but a positive duty for him to return to Bayreuth, which he had left in sorrow.[1] And those who heard him play the *Matthew Passion* at that time might well have said of him, more truly than of anybody else, that he was, in a sense, waiting in the antechamber for the moment when the doors should be opened to him — the doors, not of the Church, but of that exalted and ineffable emotion that descended upon him from *Parsifal*, and that he had absorbed into himself, in a way that transcended any ceremonial baptism.

As regards practical arrangements, everything went on as well as their hearts could desire. The theatre could, indeed, cause them nothing but rejoicing, for everything connected with the scenery was admirable, and this time the best possible preparations had been made, while all cares had been absolutely charmed away by the wonderful and beneficent hand which protected the theatre from this time onwards. Indeed, in spite of the quiet modesty with which Adolf Gross held himself in the background, what he did was none the less important; there was not a day nor a moment during the developments that followed on which it was not obvious that few put into practice as he did the words from *Parsifal* upon which he acted without needing to adopt them as a motto: "*Wer guter Tat sich freut* (For him whose heart is true)." Quite apart from their artistic merits, the photographs which he took of the family at Wahnfried and of the festival are among the finest services rendered by this incomparable man, enabling him to express, not only his unalloyed enthusiasm for art, but also his infinite love for Wahnfried. What were all those who came and went — not even the most exalted personages excepted — compared to this quiet, kindly man who watched over both the present and the future, always with the same whimsical little smile and kind eyes? Nobody knew this better than Frau Cosima. When Frau Feustel died, she wrote him a touching letter, and on days of saddest remembrance she wrote to him from the Villa d'Angri, amid all the radiant splendour of Naples, to tell him how in dreams she had gone to meet him and his wife and had wept with them and shared in their mourning; while, when an elemental phenomenon of nature — the eruption of Vesuvius — made such an impression upon her that she felt like some Valkyrie hearing a summons from the skies, she described the scene to him with all the magnificence of colour that she could command, especially in her letters. But he quietly watched over everything; and if it is possible to say that all greatness springs from fidelity, it must be added that his care extended to the smallest and most simple things as well as to the greatest, embracing the life of this noble pair and of the whole house of Wahnfried up to this very day. Such was the spirit of Bayreuth, of which he was, so to speak, a living corner-stone, in quite a different sense from the "Harfenstein" described by Oskar von Redwitz in his mawkish yet mendacious epic *Amaranth*. It was not the stone that gave forth music, but, starting from it and in consequence of it, life and music were preserved. And this is why, in spite of all, the Master felt infinitely happier in Bayreuth than in the south, while his wife revealed herself in a far more brilliant light than in the brightest sun of Naples, so that he justly observed: "This century has achieved one good action, it has borne you."

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[1] See Glasenapp, VI, 501. The anonymous letter had said that *Parsifal* ought not to be conducted by a Jew. Levi had been so much upset by it that he had withdrawn to Bamberg, and returned only when Wagner wrote to him pressing him not to resign the conductorship. — Tr.

And now came the period of rehearsals, at which the Master once more proved not only his boundless technical ability, but also, in a sense, his eternal youth. Though a sick man — and nobody could escape this impression or the anxiety caused by it — the rehearsals worked a transformation in him, so that even Frau Cosima, who was never free from care on his account night or day, positively exulted when she saw him among his artists at the first rehearsal. She felt that from him the great stimulus must and would go forth that should enable the artists to do justice to this work, the whole character of which was so novel and in every sense so strange to them. He was not always satisfied, and once, as they were driving down the hill through wind and storm, he said that he would be best pleased if the wind would blow the whole theatre away. There were many moments when he was more embittered than ever before; but this was due to the state of his health, no change in which proved possible, even as a result of the journey to Italy which he was to take later. At this time they had to visit Dresden for certain little medical attentions which his health demanded, and these days brought her beloved husband's past infinitely near to her, making her, as she said, feel quite at home in Dresden. They went along the roads which he had so often trodden, they visited the village of Kraupendorf, where he had written *Lohengrin*, they went to the Marcolini Palace, where he had lived and worked, where all his great ideas had absolutely sprung from his brain like Athene from the head of Zeus, and where he had received a visit from her father — all of which had a boundless fascination for this warm-hearted and imaginative woman. The whole of the past, which she already knew from his reminiscences, rose up before her, and what had been till now but lifeless words came fully to life, so that her love, as it were, embraced every hour of that restless and suffering existence, throughout which he had never failed to pursue a conscious aim. And so they returned to Bayreuth, where a visit from Liszt was now announced. On July 2 he had met with an accident, upon which some light is thrown by the memoirs of Adelheid von Schorn, a confidential friend of the Princess Wittgenstein — for, just as Telramund had four vassal nobles, so this Ortrud-Wittgenstein had four ladies of gentle birth in attendance upon her, who did all her behests as in duty bound. Hence we read in Adelheid von Schorn's *Erinnerungen* [*Zwei Menschenalter*] that the great change in Liszt's life and condition started from this accident. But anyone who looks closely into the subject knows that it had its origin, not in this fall downstairs, but in the greater fall caused him by the vast disillusionment that he had experienced — a fall, indeed, like that of Lucifer. An attempt has been made to attribute the wasting of his limbs, his swollen body, and other outward symptoms of old age to this accident, but only in order to conceal the fact that the sole responsibility for his failing health, and above all for his failing interest in life, rested with the lady in Rome. His grand-daughter Daniela tended him faithfully, for she had inherited from her mother the qualities fitting her for this, which soothed him and touched his heart, just as later, when her own father was ill, she always brought him peace and won a smile of happiness from him amid all the misery into which he had sunk. It was she who managed to do this, and there can be no question that Bülow saw in this daughter the image of her beloved mother. These were peaceful days that Liszt spent at Bayreuth, where they celebrated Loldi's return, at which Frau Cosima felt all the joys of a mother. But now came a letter from the Princess Marie von Hohenlohe, intimating her mother's desire that Daniela should accompany her grandfather to Rome. The Master, too, gave his consent, though grumblingly. It is really splendid to see him fuming at these peremptory summonses which are always arriving at Wahnfried from without; for he meant to be master and, above all, to have full paternal rights over the two daughters of the first marriage. He was hurt when Daniela wrote about her father, or when, as afterwards happened, she addressed a letter to her sister Isolde as "Isolde von Bülow," which plunged him into a state of the deepest mental agitation, from which he only recovered with difficulty.

He too has told us the reasons which made him so excessively jealous of his family. There is an infinite charm in observing all this, and they might all feel glad, and even flattered, at this jealousy, which, however, caused him many dark hours. And so, on the very day when Frau Cosima was silently celebrating in memory the anniversary of her first meeting with Wagner, Daniela departed, just before her birthday, and accompanied Liszt to Rome, where she passed many an interesting hour, together with many that were most trying. It may be reserved for some later day to throw a clear and definite light upon the figure of the Princess. The story of how she met the daughter of that Cosima whom she had handed over to the tormenting supervision of her own governess, in such a way that the harm was prolonged over two generations, forms a chapter apart. However, Daniela went, and at first her letters were quite mild in tone; but it is no wonder that a certain violence makes its appearance in them later.

But at this time the state of her husband's health occupied Frau Cosima's mind far more than Daniela's visit to Rome. He was suffering, and every night increased her anxiety, so that the doctor urgently advised that he should go away. By request of Dr. Landgraf, Professor Leube of Erlangen was called in, but his examination led to reassuring results, for he said that there was no sign of any disease that gave grounds for anxiety. But he, too, advised change of air, and so they started out at once. They spent one more beautiful evening with their friends at Bayreuth, especially the Gross family. It was now that their relations with Marie, their friend Gross's wife, became more and more affectionate. She was in some sense the complement of her husband, and Frau Cosima included her in the faithful friendship that she felt for him.

And so they started out, and after a short halt at the station at Munich, where their friend Levi met them, they travelled on over the Brenner, where the snow-bound landscape reminded them both of Tannhäuser's pilgrimage:

Wenn im Hospiz der Pilger sich erquickte,
Die Glieder bettet' ich in Schnee und Eis.

(When in the hospice he found rest and comfort,
My limbs I laid upon the ice and snow.)[1]

And, passing through Rome, where Daniela was staying, they reached Naples, where they only stopped long enough to pay a visit full of happy memories to the Villa d'Angri, before going on board the ship which bore them to Palermo; for he felt an irresistible longing for the south. He had spent the whole journey brooding over the guide-books and was absolutely bent upon a voyage up the Nile, an idea which had grown up in the society of his friends and as a result of the Count Gobineau's stories. He had only unwillingly renounced the idea and fixed on Palermo as his goal. Those who have made the journey there know how queer the boats have always been, from the days of Goethe — who had to calm the people on deck when a storm threatened, and succeeded in doing so — down to this crossing, when only one cabin was to be found for the Master, Frau Cosima and the whole family being forced to look for a place on deck, which they found among a heterogeneous collection of fellow-passengers, in which every class was represented, from peasants, soldiers, and convicts upwards, not to speak of a large but quiet and peaceable collection of animals. But as the Monte Pellegrino rose before her in the glow of dawn, and the wonderful landscape was revealed to her in the radiance of the morning light, she was richly compensated for such a night, and felt the spell that nobody has escaped, from Goethe down to our own day.

And now came the days in Palermo, which they spent first at the hotel. Everything delighted her, everything produced an impression upon her; and she walked happily about the streets of this remarkable city and was filled with enthusiasm by the grandeur of Monreale. They were beautiful days and hours that they passed here, and the Master succeeded in devoting himself to his orchestral score, at which he was working with boundless energy, for he aimed at finishing it there, though he cast a veil of mystery over this, as over so many other things, even towards his wife. But he, too, enjoyed their stay here, though he could not succeed in shaking off the effects of the annoyances accompanying their visit to Sicily as easily as Frau Cosima. At times, indeed, even his golden humour, which lent life to the whole party, failed him, though he succeeded in making up for this in other ways. And so Christmas came round. On the evening of the 24th, as she was sitting in the twilight, a man entered the room, and Wagner's voice sighed out: "It has not arrived" — to which she replied with a laugh that her birthday was developing into a calamity for him. But now he drew nearer to her, accompanied by the man, whom she had taken for her husband's faithful barber. It was Joukowsky, who had arrived with the Christmas presents from Palermo, where he had acted as courier. But she too had her surprise ready; and so their Christmas Eve party, which they had to celebrate this time in the palmy south, with no Christmas-tree, took place in the conservatory belonging to the house where they were staying. Here the candles were lit up, and she spread out the presents for him and the children. On the next morning he appeared at her door and cried: "Congratulations, congratulations (*Gratl, gratl*)!" "And as he gaily wished me a happy Christmas," she adds, "his mighty head seemed to me like the head of a child. He soon became serious and, surrounded by the children, presented me with his dear presents — *Polonia*![1] The draft of *Parsifal*, the talisman — *Ring* — pious fraud! — the completed orchestral score!" Thus his masterpiece was here accompanied by his youthful overture, which was at once played and gave them all a deep delight. Such were the gleams of light in this remarkable life, upon which the unaccustomed surroundings none the less produced a strong effect.

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[1] *Tannhäuser*, III, iii. — Tr.

But much sad news came from the outer world, especially that of the death of old Brandt,[2] which made the Master feel that he had lost his right hand for the festival. He was deeply affected, and Frau Cosima no less so; but they knew quite well that he had a son who might succeed in forming an admirable substitute for his deceased father. But saddest of all was the fate of poor Daniela, who was still in durance vile at Rome, with nobody who was any real support to her. The Princess tyrannized over her, not as poor Gudrun's wicked stepmother had done, when she set her to do the washing among the handmaidens on the sea-shore, but spiritually. Every word she addressed to her contained some nasty dig, while Daniela could look for no real help from Malwida, who was also in Rome, and who should certainly have been the one to protect her friend's daughter; but in the presence of the Princess her mother wit failed her. Besides, there was another thing: Frau Helbig was a friend of Cosima's, but an enemy of Malwida's, and this feminine quarrel introduced another cause of discord into this young life — all of which was not lacking in its comic side; but it was a most painful time, and it certainly was not very gratifying when the Princess wrote reproachful letters to Frau Cosima too, as the bad mother of a bad daughter, which of course infuriated the Master beyond endurance. He could not understand why Liszt did not shake off this burdensome connexion. "But that is the way," as he humorously remarked, "when a manly female dominates a womanish male (*wenn ein Frauenbild ein Mannszimmer beherrscht*)."

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[1] His early *Polonia Overture*. — Tr.

[2] The engineer who had designed the stage machinery for Bayreuth. — Tr.

He was still at work putting the finishing touches to the orchestral score, which still lacked a few pages, though he would not admit it. The evening of January 13 came round, and while the Overture to *Die Feen* was being played in Joukowsky's honour, the Master withdrew, and, as she writes: "I went to see what he was doing, he was finishing the score. 'It gave me no peace,' he said. The mighty strains of the March from *Tannhäuser* were heard; he entered — and lo! it was finished. All the while he was working at this — as, indeed, at all his other works — he had been afraid of being interrupted by death. At dinner he poured out his troubles to us. Today, while he was talking, I placed the Monreale goblet upon his table, and on going to his room to fetch something he discovered it, stayed away for a time, and then came back, carrying the heavy casket. He was pleased with it. Eva saw it first, then Fidi. Then we told him all about it, and how Joukowsky's design was used for this purpose at my request. Our friends left later, and Richard and I continued to sit up, talking about the completion of the various works, *Tristan, The Mastersingers,* and, above all, about the end of life. It was a solemn hour." To accompany the goblet, which was to be, as it were, a symbol of the Grail-chalice, she had composed two stanzas, one of which began:

Sangue reale	(*Sangue reale*
Wirkliches Blut,	The true blood,
Sangreiche Schale	Precious cup
Weihliches Gut.	Holy boon.)

On the next day took place the *Parsifal* banquet.

They had invited the Count Gobineau to take part with them in it, but he did not come, which hurt and grieved the Master; but, as he said to Frau Cosima: " I need nobody but you. That is why I staked everything on winning you, though I would have done it for nobody else. But I am glad if I count at all to anybody." His resentment against the Princess and the whole state of affairs in Rome was, to be sure, still greater, for, as he said: " Where that witch has her finger in the pie (*Wo die Hexe sich hineinmischt*), it is all hell for me." Frau Cosima tried, of course, to calm him, and it would have been contrary to her nature to throw stones at the Princess, though she would have been fully justified in doing so.

Meanwhile the question was how to get out of the hotel at last, for he was upset at the abominably extortionate prices. And so, thanks to the good offices of Count Tasca, whose acquaintance they had made, Frau Cosima found accommodation for them in the Villa Porazzi — not at all a happy choice, for Siegfried fell ill there. A typhus fever kept him in bed for a long time, which caused hours of grievous anxiety to his mother, and especially for his father, for Wagner himself fell ill; but here again she showed her wonderful gift for doing everything to make him as comfortable as possible, both materially and spiritually. But she could not control his agitation about their son's illness; indeed, she could hardly control the worry which she felt herself on account of her husband's health; and she now wrote a wonderful letter to her friend Mimi: " Of course, most beloved Mimi, the intensity of your grief had something to do with restoring your husband to health. I firmly believe in this power; in fact, I cannot help doing so, for it is the only thing that sustains me now that I seem to myself to be on the threshold of things that I cannot endure. I do indeed believe in this sacred, protecting ardour of the emotions and lose my whole self in it. I feel as though you had done the same during those terrible days, and as though you too had been helped by it! Allow me to hope, as much as I desire it — that is, with the whole strength of my heart — that your mind is now at rest, and give you some idea of our life in the order in which things have happened since the arrival of your letter; and first of all, the impression made upon us by this letter, which was such a beautiful one that our little circle enjoyed it for a long time. My husband considered some parts of it quite unique, and the reason why I tell you this is that you know how rarely he praises anything. At that time we were still at the Hôtel des Palmes and minus Daniela. About a week later she appeared, in ecstasy at being with us again, and we are very glad to have her back. I had been thoroughly uneasy during the latter part of the time that she was away, and was glad that it was over. I enclose a letter of hers, which was gratifying to my feelings, for I had been afraid lest the eccentricities to which she was exposed might possibly have led her into hasty actions, for she has an impulsive temperament. They were no ordinary conditions and men with which she became acquainted in Rome: the Princess Hohenlohe, her mother and her brother-in-law, the Cardinal, Nadine Helbig and her imposing if not very pious mother, the abbess, and the Bonaparte circle, Gobineau, the Countess Mathilde Minghetti, Malwida, many well-known people, such as Renan, and many artists, such as Sgambati, Simiradsky, and so on. I fix my eyes on this in order to comfort myself a little, for what she told me simply made me shudder. All the things I do not mention before her were discussed in her presence, she saw all personal relations in an almost horrifying light, and, even in quite insignificant matters, the verdict was always diametrically opposed to mine; for instance, I had praised Madame de Rémusat; whereupon she was told that this lady was a *femme de chambre*, and so on. Meanwhile there were plans for a marriage, one of which, that might quite seriously have been very suitable, was inexplicably broken off. But she bore herself valiantly through it all; I try to console myself for the fact that she had to witness odious and even abominable things. How different conditions were in Berlin a year ago! . . . However, here she is back again, and soon afterwards we began our move. Perhaps she has told you what good, sympathetic people we have found here. I have really been able to introduce Boni into society here without many efforts of my own, and the dear child is enchanted with the country and the people. Since my husband complained of the hotel here, Prince Gangi, a member of the family (of Lanza di Trabia) of Manfredian memory, offered us his villa, and we moved in. But no sooner had we done so than the trouble began, and, as ill luck would have it, it turned cold at the same time, so my husband became indisposed and very depressed. The doctor was powerless against the former state, and I against the latter, and I was consigning myself into the hands of the good angels a thousand times a day, when Siegfried fell ill. It was typhus fever, and his recovery will certainly be very slow. But at this crushing experience a feeling of — how shall I describe it to you? — almost of calm, descended upon me. I had no fear even of the worst that could happen, but remembered all the while that there are mothers who have to suffer that. You can imagine that Siegfried has turned out a delightful patient. But he is still very pale, and felt too weak to get up today. But my mind is easy about him by comparison with my anxiety about his father. How can I tell you my thoughts about this subject, though I am so glad to know that you are aware of them? The higher and wider the flights of genius, the greater the distances to which its glance penetrates, the nearer it comes to the sun of truth and steeps itself in its rays — the easier it finds it to grasp the world and reality. In one of his letters to Willemer, Goethe speaks of how any isolated human being, glad though he might be to work with those of like views to his own, will seem to himself to be merely approaching the unattainable. When Richard is in this condition, his suffering is caused by the inevitable isolation of genius: there may be real sympathy for his work, but there cannot be for his ideas and sentiments, and he is coming to the point at which he sees this and conceives an aversion for his own endeavours. To this is added the fact — and necessarily so, for in one's youth one's vision is more limited — that years no longer bring with them facility of movement, so that, unless a miracle happens, the suffering becomes permanent. But miracles do happen, and always will happen, so long as hearts beat in sympathy. I remember how, long ago, I heard that episode in the Old Testament turned to ridicule, in which Moses had his arms held up to heaven by Aaron and another during the battle, because victory had been promised to him on these terms and he felt his own weakness. I believe that even I myself considered this story lacking in significance. But now the image often comes into my mind. Victory is certainly the reward reserved for passionate supplication, but one's strength flags, and who helps to fold one's hands, who animates one's sinking spirits? Who, indeed? And who would not desire some sign, some assistance from without, as it were, to show souls to themselves as they are, when one scarcely has power to follow them any longer? And to whom is the supplication addressed? To the God imprisoned within us — and it is all a mystery, until the miracle has happened, which grows, gently yet surely, out of all these agonies, as blossoms spring from the most prickly plants. When I ask myself in what the difficulties of our existence really consist, amid so many blessings, the answer is this: in the necessity for remaining in the world when one has finished with it, and for arming beings for it and against it while one cannot but regard retirement from it as the *sine qua non* of life — one's children, for instance — and here again one finds trials and blessings in one and the same thing. Daily life is a help to one in this, every day brings its knot to unravel, and so life flows on. I have found endless pleasure in reading the correspondence that I have mentioned to you before. It is a real idyll and makes one feel as though no such thing as real suffering existed; it is full of lively sentiment, with no display of cleverness whatever, accompanied by a delicate wit and a noble, natural — I might almost say, disregard of all that happens in the world. It seems beautiful to me that G. should say so much to the married couple about the bonds of love, and I had to admit that only in Germany would such a charming and pure union be possible. It is like a walk through a flowery meadow — our meadow is indeed far, far away from this one, so far that one asks oneself whether it could even come within the range of vision of such a being. But that is not the point, and when I observe that in our little corner of the world in Europe men have such varying gestures to express yes and no that it was long before I understood how people have degenerated in this respect, I understand to what an extent diversity was the aim, and I rejoice in the variations, so long as these are beautiful and good. On the other hand, all that comes to me from the conventional world causes me grief. I remember, for instance, how, years ago, I had pictured to myself the relations between G. and M. L. T., neither of whom I know, in quite a poetic light — indeed, the dilettantism in which they shared, the modelling and painting, pleased me, yet what did I hear about it? We have made a last attempt to get him to come to us altogether, my husband has written him a vigorous letter, but it seems to be an odd affair. And since I am on the subject of oddities, I must thank you for what you tell me about the Brahmsiad. In my opinion, the Princess M[arie] H[ohenlohe] was quite right when she wrote to D[aniela] that B.'s delight in him was a joy like that of the solution of a difficult problem in arithmetic. Some people might feel a little hurt at it, but he walks like a ghost of the departed among the shades. But what connexion has all this with *Parsifal*? I had rather make no reply to this, but content myself with rejoicing that you have already found consolation in it during your dark days. In my eyes, there is no doubt that this most divine of works stands for a rounding-off, a consummation of those that preceded it. In the composition of the words to *Parsifal*, as in none other of the works, I find that there is a complete inevitability in the working out, and just as in *The Ring* we witness the passing of a myth, the end of a divine world, so in *Parsifal* we see the inception of a religion in its utmost naïveté. It is true that the characters in it will only be able to receive an approximate rendering, but, owing to the religious sentiment which it awakens, one will perhaps demand their full realization less than in the other libretti. But I was grateful for your hint about M. Br., and also about Albani.

FRAU COSIMA

with FRAU MARIE GROSS, DANIELA *and* HEINZ THODE, COUNT GRAVINA *and* COUNTESS BLANDINE
— *Photograph by A. v. Gross*

Thank you, too, on behalf of Stein, who was quite delighted, uplifted, and elated by your kind reception. I have a very special opinion of him and consider that he has both talent and character; there is a touch of vanity in this, too, for I flatter myself that I have helped to develop something in him, and even to perfect it. But for what have I not to thank you? Why, when I meet with a friendly reception in society, it is a joy to me to remember that my first return to contact with the world came about through your agency, and to trace even in the most distant tokens of goodwill an after effect of your action and championship, which gives such insignificant things a pleasing value and import, just like the pleasure it gives me at this moment to see on my bedroom curtains a slight quiver of light coming through the closed shutters, and to tell myself that it is a little reflection of the mirror-like surface of the pond in the garden as the sun shines on its ripples. So thanks and praise be to you, and may fortune remain true to you, for you are a true bringer of fortune!"

This letter really gives us the most beautiful picture of her state of mind during their Italian visit, which at last came to an end — with the betrothal of her daughter Blandine. Daniela had previously arrived and been greeted with rejoicing. The hard experiences that had depressed her disappeared before the pretty and affectionate ways of Siegfried, who gave her the most delightful welcome and cut short all explanations. The question of a marriage had arisen for her, too, in passing, but, possibly owing to the Princess's lack of all delicacy, as Frau Cosima wrote, a thoroughly good and brilliant match had been frustrated. Things were quite different now that she was here, and this noble woman now proved her warm heart and clear-sighted and unerring understanding both as a mother and as a woman of the world. She had made arrangements for her daughters to be brought out in society and had herself accompanied them to a ball, with the consent of the Master, who was even present at her toilette. But his usual nervousness then overtook him, and like a strict paterfamilias — or, rather, a family tyrant — he forbade his daughters to go to the ball, though the occasion was not an unimportant one. The whole episode is unspeakably charming and reveals that antagonism between genius and ordinary life which usually shows itself in the form of caprice and jealousy. No such motive was present in him, however, for in the end his fatherly goodness always carried the day entirely. Thus on April 6 Frau Cosima was able to write to her friend Mimi: "I hope that you have no worries on your mind, and that, without appearing inopportune, I may announce to you the betrothal of Blandine to the Count Gravina, second son of the Prince of Ramacca. I may adduce as the grounds for my consent the great mutual attraction between them, his admirable character, delicate sensibilities, and good heart, besides a very old name (in the fifteenth century one of the kings of Sicily granted the counts Gravina the right of burial among the kings in the Cathedral of Catania). Moreover, I firmly believe that the excellent social relations which Boni will acquire may be advantageous to her — indeed, that it will decidedly suit her to be transplanted to foreign soil. You will understand me, and I know you will be pleased with Gravina, who is sympathetic to my husband as well; but I know, too, what will be said in other quarters, and so we had rather say nothing about it before the wedding, which will take place at the end of August. I hope you will be present at it."

They now took their leave, after offering the society of Palermo yet another beautiful evening's entertainment, at which, in honour of her daughter's betrothal, the *Siegfried Idyll* was performed, as well as the *Kaisermarsch* and the *Huldigungsmarsch,* Wagner conducting the orchestra, which he succeeded in inspiring with enthusiasm. But the most beautiful thing about this festival was the memories that it awakened in both of them, though once more she felt it to be almost a desecration to perform the *Idyll* in public. Escorted by the young Count Gravina, to whom they were both becoming more and more attached, they went to lovely Acireale, from which for the first time they really enjoyed Sicily to the full, though it was also the scene of one of the most terrible moments which she had to bear before the fatal February 13, thus giving her a foretaste of the end. She was full of an idea that had occurred to the Master at Porazzi, and "on which he had improvised on the previous evening in the most fascinating way" — a melody which, so she says, "brought back to me the most secret processes of his soul and filled me with ecstasy. But on the next morning the maidservant brought word that Richard had been seized with a violent spasm. I hurried to him and saw what affected me so violently that I fainted. I soon collected myself again and returned to Richard from the bed where they had laid me. His condition gradually became calmer, he became, as it were, full of electricity (*elektrisiert*) and started jesting again. But he was very much fatigued. Only yesterday we had again been talking about our end, and I had said that I would do anything, anything, if only I might be worthy to die with him. He said that we had got to live; that was far harder. But my fainting-fit today gave me hope. Ah, should I leave thee, Siegfried, before I have guided thy footsteps into sure ways, oh, remember me, be good and valiant, and flee from all that is base!"

His condition improving, they visited Catania and, above all, Taormina, which produced a lasting effect upon her. It was here that, as the island lay stretched out before them, he was prompted to say: "It is there that we ought to have fled in 1858 and spared ourselves many, many useless agonies." But it is curious how at this time the thought of Hans von Bülow kept recurring again and gave rise to serious and painful explanations, so that the Master's resentment, though in itself quite justified, ended by offending her and chilling her to the heart. But then once more he was able to prove to her in his touching way in what sentiments this feeling had its origin, and her heart was magnanimous enough, not only to forgive him, but, as he expressed it, "to let the whole thing slide (*alles laufen zu lassen*)." This was perhaps the most beautiful part of their travels, and Good Friday in the quiet church at Acireale made a profound impression upon her, only equalled by that of the scene when the sick Garibaldi passed through and was saluted and escorted in state on his way by the populace. It was a great moment when they beheld this man, sick unto death though he was, and Wagner tried to do justice to it as far as he could, even more, indeed, than was historically justifiable. But their hours were numbered. They took their leave and, escorted by the young Count Gravina, went by boat to Naples, where the Master dismissed him with such a touching farewell speech that they were all in tears, with the exception of Blandine. He asked her, in tones of warm reproach, whether she had no heart, whereupon, throwing herself at his feet, she replied that if she were to weep, she would never be able to staunch the flow of her tears. They now returned to Venice, where they once again passed beautiful and wondrous days. It is remarkable with what emotion she entered this city, and she said that Venice was certainly the city where she would most wish to die. Upon which young Siegfried remarked most emphatically: " For my part, I should choose to die at Bayreuth, for, beautiful as all this may be, what one likes best is to return home." " Richard praised this love of home, saying: ' Woe to him who does not possess it.' I thank Fidi from my heart for knowing so well how to please me." But Wagner, too, had the gift of finding words which went straight to her very soul, as, for instance, when he said to the children: " There is only one being who has been indispensable to me and without whom I could not have lived. That was your mother. I was madly in love with her (*auf die war ich versessen*)."

Daniela had accepted an invitation from Mimi's mother, the Princess Hatzfeldt, which again rather gave offence to the Master, though this could not be helped; and he remarked, in another mood: " We really ought to have married off all the children, and then both linger for hours on end in an arbour on a sunny river-bank. That is what I picture to myself. We found each other too late! We ought to have been united much sooner! " " He then handed me the announcement of Hans's engagement and asked: ' Can this be that " resolution of discords " which Hans mentioned in his last letter? It makes me very much afraid for the children.' " When Bülow asked his daughter whether she had read a notice in the paper, though none had appeared, her feelings were still further depressed, and she enters in her diary: " Lusch showed me a letter from her father which filled me with sorrowful and grave reflections. The manner in which he announces his engagement seems to me to give ground for anxiety." And she suggested to her daughter the form in which she should answer her father. But, for her own part, she rejoiced in the eternal atmosphere of Venice, which has the power to enhance joy, but to mitigate sorrow. One morning, when he had gone with the children to St. Mark's, she hastened to the Museo delle Arte, and as she was standing before M. Marziale's picture " The Supper at Emmaus," the Master appeared behind her and went with her to look at the beautiful Bellini Madonna and, above all, at the Assumption, of which she said that it reminded her in a way of the Ninth Symphony, with which he agreed, saying rather resignedly: " We have nothing so perfect (*Vollendetes*) in music, ours are but attempts." They spent moments of ecstasy here, as they also did later in St. Mark's, where a great feast of the Church was in progress, about which she writes: " A strange impression, which did one good, to see the mass of people surging towards the shrine of the saint. The crypt was brilliantly illuminated and offered a similar spectacle, save that in the midst of the crowd there was a woman kneeling in prayer, not so much leaning against as almost melting into one with an image of Christ! To see such fervour in the midst of this unthinking though pious commotion! Was it despair, such as led Gretchen to Our Lady of Sorrows, or was it a passion of adoration? We could not see her face, but the scene imprinted itself on one's heart; this was love indeed, this was piety."

After a visit to the Palazzo Vendramin, which they made to an accompaniment of guitars and folk-songs, they went on to the station. Having stopped for a short time in Munich, where they once again found pleasure in the old friendship of Lenbach, they returned to Bayreuth, where the Gross family was awaiting them; and she writes exultantly: " In Wahnfried at last," with a feeling of happiness and bliss, which caused her to say that they had returned to their peaceful haven.

A few days later arrived the completed piano-scores, heralding the opening of the festival period. Next came the preparations for Wagner's birthday, of which Frau Cosima herself has given a wonderful description: " A happy awakening! Unfortunately this was followed by a spasm in the breast, so that the children's congratulations had to be postponed. During this pause Gravina suddenly arrived, filling us with joy and alarm. I hid him in our Count's room and made signs to the children, who all knew of it except Blandine! At last the car of Thespis was able to draw up. Richard came downstairs and received the children's congratulations and withdrew after embracing them with tears, Boni, still in her robes, sobbing at the thought that this was the last birthday party at which she would be present. We called her, but she kept her face covered with her hands, at last she heard Gravina's voice, and we withdrew! —

" And now the thing was to surprise Richard with this arrival. The new covers were put in place in the drawing-room, and as soon as I had shown him the little present in the garden, consisting of the fish, the golden pheasant, and the roses, we entered the room, which was now renovated, and the bell rang for dinner. Biagino was the first to enter, to the high delight of Richard, who admitted to us that, through his arrival, he had recovered his vital spirits, for he had been very exhausted. A glance from Else (Ritter) informed me that the boys had come, and Blandine rose and proposed his toast most beautifully (Richard remarked to me that at this moment she had been absolutely transfigured). Else actually slipped out without being noticed by Richard, and, supported by her, the chorus came in wonderfully at just the right time, affecting us all deeply. Richard said he hoped his own performance would go off as well as our little festival had done. At the end Fidi, as herald of honour, presented him with the telegrams and the program of the evening's entertainment, and while Richard was resting and the children were holding a musical session with Joukowsky, I got ready the hall for the performance. Then we went out to Richard's black swans, which give him the greatest pleasure, and on our return to the house we found the fifty boys, entertained by Siegfried, filling Wahnfried with the strains of *Parsifal,* and with a merry tumult besides. By eight o'clock our troupe was ready. The first piece, by Cervantes, went off very swimmingly. Next the *Liebesnot* was performed, with some nervousness, Humperdinck and Hausburg playing the scherzo from the Ninth Symphony behind the scenes between the two pieces. Everything went off to our heart's desire, and Daniela really distinguished herself, the arrangements for the scenery worked well, and we all had reason to be pleased with our success. Richard was in the most cheerful spirits all the time, nothing spoilt the day, and we were able to make a success of it all and give Richard a little treat. And to me this success is like a divine salutation."

Perhaps she felt — though she suppressed her feeling — that this birthday was the last one, and that all of them ought, like Blandine, to have hidden their faces in their hands. But it was the "divine salutation" that kept a veil still drawn over her forebodings, for great and mighty events still awaited him.

The preparations for the birthday festivities had been simply splendid, though the important thing about them was not, of course, the actual events, of which Glasenapp has given a touching description, but Frau Cosima's feelings, for she gave full rein to her humour, as though trying to deaden her feelings, so as not to leave any room for gloomy forebodings. On the next morning he awoke in a happy frame of mind, greeting her with the words: "You are a splendid fellow (*ein herrlicher Kerl*)." Of course neither of them could continue in this frame of mind, for Lulu had to leave them and spend some time as a sort of Iphigenia in Aulis, whose lot it was to be offered up as a sacrifice. At any rate, Wagner had made up his mind to consent that his Daniela should once again return for a time to her father. It was not, indeed, a very paternal atmosphere into which she entered, and musically it was very different from the one in which she had grown up; indeed, it was an unspeakable falling-off to go to the Musical Festival at Aachen, but the whole tendency which Bülow had now adopted in violent opposition to Bayreuth marked a falling-off. His future wife had written to him in the most well-meaning way that she was bent upon becoming a Brahmsian ("*sich zu verbrahmsen*"), and he did the same out of gloomy resentment against Bayreuth; and just as Nietzsche pitted his musical heroes against the creator of Parsifal, so Bülow now pitted Brahms against Bayreuth — a rival monarch who was really incapable of maintaining himself by his own strength, and whose works remind one of the fairy-tale about the boy who went to gather dead leaves in the forest and found them to be of gold, but on carrying them home found that after all they were nothing but faded leaves. Indeed, it was only so long as Bülow's glance shone upon these scores that the pages became of gold — after which they turned to dry leaves again. But the whole of this time was marked by a longing on the part of Wagner for people who loved him, and whom he could love; whose understanding of him was no dog-like devotion, but who could offer him one thing — a spiritual and spiritualized personality. One such had appeared on his birthday — that is, Count Gobineau. In spite of the difference of language, Wagner was attached to him with his whole heart, and with his intelligence as well, so that he was able to surmount all the racial qualities which were certainly present in the noble Count and differentiated him from Wagner, in spite of his Norman origin. For, as events were shaping themselves at that time, this racial connexion was essentially no more than a dream and a *jeu d'esprit.* But personality remains the most precious thing that earth has to give, and this friendship proved its full value, which it never lost, when Gobineau fell dangerously ill at Bayreuth, and for the first time Frau Cosima's anxiety was chiefly on his account. The doctors at once held a consultation, though not with very satisfactory results, and, fresh from these impressions, she wrote to her friend Mimi: " You know, of course, that our friend Gobineau has been very ill indeed. My impression was that he had had a sort of stroke at our house. He is getting on much better now and is going to Gastein next week by the advice of his doctor.

" What are your plans at present? I have heard from Feustel's son-in-law that you have written for your tickets. It is my husband's wish that we should be present at the performances in the balcony (to the left of the royal box). Will you not consent to sit with us, at least for some of them? It is a very, very long way off, it is true, but all the same . . . However, I leave it entirely to you. I only hope that your lodging will be to your liking. It is a respectable middle-class residence, but I really do not quite know how Feustel could promise you a house with a garden, as your dear mother tells me, or even the Fantaisie, which is at present an apple of discord. Provided only that your honoured husband consents to take a cure at Wildbad and is not unwilling to come to our little cosmopolitan retreat (*Weltnest*). Will you be so kind as to give him our warmest regards? I meant to write to your dear mother, but you cannot imagine how my life is broken up at present. I positively dread Stein, who is arriving soon, for he will certainly find fault with me for doing so little for Siegfried — and justly so! Please make my excuses to your mother and give her my most sincere and grateful greetings, and do be indulgent towards me — boundlessly indulgent — and always be kind to me, for I depend upon you with all my soul."

And during these May days — chilly and cold and rainy though they often were, so that the Master cursed both the climate and Bayreuth — he was most deeply conscious of the ineffably beautiful ties with his home, which his wife illumined for him; so that she was able to write: " On re-entering our house, fresh from the impression of the garden, he stood in the hall, looking out on the garden through the drawing-room, and then looked round the room itself, which put him in the most cheerful frame of mind. He came to me and said that he had been looking for the children, to say to them: ' It is divine here, and my wife is divine. But now,' he added, ' I say it to you in person.' " This idyll was going on all the time that the heavy fatigues of the festival, with all its practical annoyances, were producing their effect upon him. The wonderful thing was that he was able and willing to let himself be distracted promptly from all external influences, or, to quote Vischer, from everything objective, so that she was able to write: " We returned to our garden and enjoyed the beautiful surroundings. We also took a pleasure in the girls, Isolde and Eva, who seemed particularly charming today." His paternal side was becoming more and more marked, and towards nobody more than Count Gobineau, who was regarded no longer as a visitor, but as a member of the family, and whom, after consulting with the doctors, Frau Cosima was determined to keep there in peace until his recovery or death.

But during the preparations for the performances a very springtide of love prevailed, and it was as though they wished to enjoy it once more in the spirit of their days at Triebschen; for she writes in her diary: " We drove up to the theatre and were thoroughly delighted with the Temple of the Grail, the flower-garden, and the wilderness. It is always a joy to Richard to come home, and he called out to me from the garden to tell me how happy he was. 'You and I know what we are,' he said, 'and so we mean to give others a chance of sharing in this happiness!' . . . I then went out to him, the Count soon joined us, and we talked about our friend Gross and his unbounded devotion." Their relations with Adolf Gross, too, were illustrated during these days in the most beautiful way, and the house of Wahnfried had good cause to realize that among the many things for which they had to thank Feustel, the greatest of all was the boundless loyalty of his daughter and son-in-law, Adolf Gross. The nearer they drew to the festival, the stronger grew this conviction, and it was directly connected with their mutual affection, which formed the most beautiful background to this unforgettable *Parsifal* period. How beautiful it is when she writes: "And time after time, now as ever, we are conscious of what we are to each other, perhaps even more ardently after eighteen years than at the beginning! . . . And there are birds building their nests in the drawing-room! Yesterday we thought that it was a little bird that had strayed in, and tried to set it free, but today we discovered that three nests have been begun; there is a constant fluttering to and fro, and this afternoon when he came downstairs, Richard told us that a little bird had been trying to come in, but when it noticed him, it flitted away like Siegfried's bird before Wotan." And one day, on returning to Wahnfried, she was able to write: "I came into his room, and we looked at my portraits: 'Believe me,' he said, 'you and I cannot be painted.'" But his glance wandered from Lenbach's works to the wonderful woman's countenance; and in his lyric and symphonic mood he would gladly have placed his art wholly at the service of her alone. Thus she writes: "On returning into the house from the garden, he wrote down a theme for a symphony, saying: 'All I need is quiet, and themes simply swarm round me at once.'" And as they sat together after this, he recalled his fiftieth birthday, and the journey that he had made from Stuttgart to Munich alone with Pfistermeister, and how isolated he had felt then. But she added: "I ventured to tell him what my idea of his life was at that time, and how I had never imagined but that his life was somewhat highly coloured. He said that if

I judged from what my father said, I might well have supposed this. But what were other women to him? If they were clever, they seemed to him null, and he invented the delightful appellation of '*Tintenwischer* (penwiper)' to express the idea of a bluestocking." But now the rehearsals started, the artists began to arrive, and one thing was manifest to Frau Cosima — that her husband felt happier among his artists than in a society which had, so to speak, a veneer of æsthetic interests — with the exception, of course, of spontaneous natures like Marie Schleinitz, Malwida von Meysenbug, and many others. But when, on the other hand, he was faced with a man like Schemann, who out of a sort of academic vanity tried, so to speak, to pit Cherubini against him, his whole nature as a creative artist rose in revolt against this professor. Frau Cosima entirely shared his opinion, so it is no wonder that in his reminiscences Schemann has treated this noble woman in a most unhistorical fashion; for the only excuse for his remarks is that he did not comprehend her greatness. The same thing has been done often enough by many others who imagine themselves to be great as they sit at their writing-tables, so let this be a final judgment upon all he has said about Frau Cosima.

In spite of all their disappointments, the days spent in rehearsal were very stimulating. It should not be forgotten that rehearsals always afford an agitating rather than a gratifying spectacle, and they agitated Wagner. For be it remembered that he had gone to Italy a sick man and returned to Bayreuth in the same state, in which he now carried through the simply superhuman achievement of the festival, afterwards entering Venice in the full consciousness that he was a sick man. In a burst of humorous self-knowledge he at last declared that he complained at everything. But when he came home and played the Count the *Charfreitagszauber*, breaking off suddenly at the passage "*Es lacht die Aue* (How smiles the meadow),"[1] to listen in company with him and his wife, whom he had found talking to the Count, to a thrush, which enchanted him with its glorious musical turn (*Doppelschlag*) — what a highly characteristic picture this shows us, and how we should cherish the impression of this quartet: Frau Cosima and the thrush, the Master and Gobineau! But Gobineau's hours were numbered, and when she took leave of him, she felt gloomy forebodings, which were only too soon to be realized, for he was a man doomed to death.

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[1] *Parsifal*, III, iii. — TR.

At the Bayreuth rehearsals, too, the scenic side ("*Theater*") was naturally to some extent bound to be a disappointment. On attending the first costume rehearsals she describes the threefold feeling which she experienced: "(1) Horror, (2) Incredible comicality of the figures, and (3) Anxious efforts at modification." But these difficulties were easily removed, and in this Frau Cosima's talent for the stage and stage effect was particularly evident. Moreover, Loldi, who had a decided talent for designing, had given her some sketches for the Flower-maidens, eschewing all outward adornment, upon which Frau Cosima immediately put her idea into action. She chose a few costumes from the theatrical wardrobe, took them home, dressed her daughter in them, and so arrived at the model for the costume of the Flower-maidens, who produced such an enchanting effect at the festival of 1882, and whose whole achievement drew special applause from the Master at almost every performance.

In general, there was no lack of great and deep impressions — for instance, the arrival of Heinrich von Stein, who, like a thorough university tutor (*Privatdozent*), had walked from Nuremberg to Bayreuth, a characteristic touch of Bohemianism which warmed their hearts to him particularly. — But Frau Cosima was happy now that things were progressing so finely, and day by day she was able to accompany the Master home, soothe him when he was excited, and keep him cheerful when he was glad. "Great, great is our pleasure at being all to ourselves, we talk or not, as we like, our very cares are homelike. Would that we might wander hence, as it says on Dürer's grave, together, unparted, united for ever!" Thus her soul was filled with that mystical excitation which had affected her since her childhood, and which prompted her to write: "When I had retired to rest last night and was dejectedly thinking over his day, the whole force of my soul concentrated itself into one prayer. May I say that I felt God near me, and that a mighty protection encircled my heart and its tremors? Early in the morning I saw Richard, who sleeps in the next room, sitting on a chair opposite me, and the apparition did not alarm me at all. All I knew was that I had both fallen asleep and awakened with his image before me."

But the day-time found her fresh and active, both at home and in the theatre. How charming is the description of the doings on the hill where stood the Festival Theatre: " In the afternoon we drove up to the theatre, the wood is coming into leaf, a mood of strange contentment comes over me in this palpitating stillness, amid which people are devoting their courage and industry to a play. The best of thoughts flutter round me like friendly birds in this forest alive with art, and even the art-work itself can scarcely transport one more than the spectacle of its unresting growth." All her efforts were bent upon keeping up his strength for this festival, for she knew that, were he to collapse now, it would be to pass into eternity. She was all the more upset — and I emphasize this trait — when a faithful American friend arrived at Wahnfried and remarked unsuspectingly that she thought Richard had aged, which was like a dagger-thrust in Frau Cosima's heart. But the Master had two sources from which to draw strength: one was her infinitely protecting goodness, and the other his work, which was rising like a wondrous edifice, thanks to the goodwill and ability of the performers. Most effective of all were the Flower-maidens, whose scene was so novel and grandiose, and, as it were, threw the whole ballet as it had existed up to that time into the shade. As Frau Cosima herself says: " After the orchestral rehearsal in the morning, we saw the Flower-maidens all grouped in one room, offering a charming spectacle, with a most heart-stirring — nay, positively unearthly — effect, our rapture was genuine." And after the rehearsal of the third act they drove home, " Richard content and I myself deeply affected. I believe it was the will of God that his art should attain to this glorified expression." And so every day brought its excitement, which had to be charmed away; and again and again she succeeded in lifting him above all his cares, especially that excessive irritability which was inseparable from his malady. For instance, she describes one incident as follows: " The evening went off pleasantly. Even after the aggravating rehearsal that morning I had been unable to refrain from telling him how overwhelmingly affecting it had all been — every gesture, every tone, the slightest action — thus distracting him from what was annoying him, and inducing him to look back upon the time when he had written it; and so this evening I ejaculated something to the same effect, and he said: ' How much we have been through together! ' He then went back over everything and went on to say: ' Why did you not say to me then (in 1858), " I will not live for anyone but you." Then I should have known what to do. But never in my life has love come spontaneously to meet me, I have never had confidence in myself, exactly like Tristan; but how was it with you? ' And gradually he fell asleep." But she, too, enjoyed the rehearsals and the work now in quite a different way, and when the Knights of the Grail embrace one another at the close of the first act, she observed: " This moment of brotherhood is one of the most moving to me "; for she entered into this celebration of the Holy Communion with a strongly religious feeling.

But, weary as she was herself, she observed her husband's increasing fatigue. Her father's arrival, indeed, brought fresh life to Wahnfried. Never had the Master welcomed him so cordially, and both now and during the rehearsals at the theatre he gave the warmest expression to this feeling. But both of them were weary. Nothing could be more touching than the following picture which she draws: " Yesterday Richard fell asleep on his great dressing-room chair. I watched over him, praying the while. Ah! we are both so tired and would gladly live with the children and for the children alone." During the night she next heard him repeating incessantly: " Adieu, children." " To whom can I tell what I think? I have no idea. Ah, care heavy as lead, pangs of anguish — he and the children, the children and he! I see Siegfried's imploring gaze! " And, filled with these sentiments, she writes: " How gladly would I take him in my arms and bear him far away from it all! " But he, too, enjoyed every moment that he could spend alone with her: " As we were sitting like this, he looked at me and said: ' Never before has there been anything like us two — there have been absurd, eccentric creatures, perhaps, but nobody like us two.' " There is something positively mediæval about the scene when she describes how she entered the hall and saw him: "He was asleep in the drawing-room and on awaking found me asleep in the hall. This vigil of mine amused him greatly, and he said that I was treating him like the great Emperor of Siam, who had a guard of women." On the very next day we find the same picture, only with a difference: it was she who had returned from a call and fallen asleep in the drawing-room out of sheer weariness. "When I awoke, Richard was sitting by my side. He had come to find me at midday to ask me: '*Lebst Du denn noch?* (Livest thou, then, still?)'[1] He had tears in his eyes and said very gently: 'What sacrifices are being made!'"

What is more, there was no break in the grey skies, the cold and mist and streaming rain. He cursed Germany, cursed Franconia, and cursed Bayreuth; and she writes: "I can do nothing but stand up for our little town and for Germany, and regard the disadvantages of our presence here as being less than the advantages." But she soon knew what these conditions and, most of all, this unprecedented burden of work portended for him. His attacks of spasms were often, it is true, connected with lapses from his dietary regime, but for her they were always moments of unspeakable pain and the gloomiest foreboding. One night she saw the spasm coming on and helped him as well as she could, when she was met by a grateful glance from his eye. And she adapted the words of Goethe and repeated them as a prayer of gratitude when his condition had improved:

Wer nie das Liebste leiden sah,
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
An ihrem Bette hilfreich sass,
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte.

(Who ne'er has seen the loved ones' pain,
  Who ne'er has spent the sad night hours
Beside the bed where they have lain,
  He knows ye not, ye heavenly powers!)

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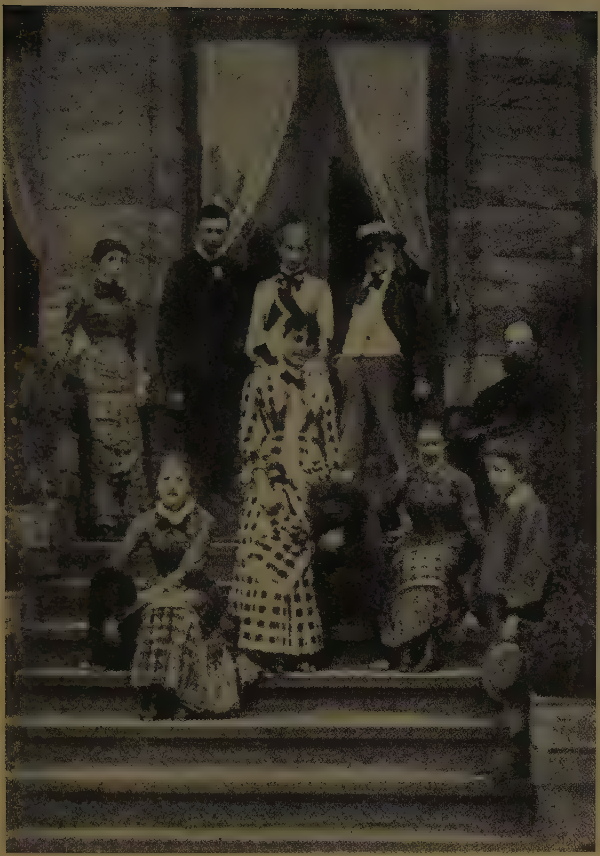
[1] *Tristan and Isolde*, III, i.—TR.

And now came the general rehearsals and the festival, and it was the task of the Lady of Bayreuth to control her nerves on every occasion, and show a cheerful face to everybody. There was no lack of those crises which are inseparable from theatrical enterprises — of fits of bad temper and alleged slights to artists — and the Wahnfried carriage had to drive round from house to house every day to appease the injured parties, or she would sit indefatigably at her writing-table and write letters which conjured up cheerful glances and serene brows again in place of furious frowns and tearful eyes. By so doing she rendered an inestimable service, as she also did in entertaining the visitors; for Wahnfried was a hospitable house, and its doors stood open to all. All their collaborators and guests, whether intimates or mere acquaintances, were gathered together, with one exception — the King did not come. The Crown Prince, indeed, appeared and was deeply affected by the work; he judiciously expressed the opinion, which had, indeed, been adroitly whispered in his ear by Marie von Schleinitz, the Sibyl of Bayreuth, that this wonderful work was only suitable for Bayreuth. But the King did not arrive. We cannot elucidate the reasons today, but we may guess at them. At the time there was talk of apoplexy, and he was said to be seriously ill, but it was other circumstances that kept him away, great as was his affection for both the work and the composer; and perhaps one of the chief reasons was the presence of the Crown Prince.

On his name-day and birthday, at least, Bayreuth had donned its festive raiment in honour of the young couple, which gave their marriage a more ceremonious character than they would perhaps have desired themselves; for, after all, the greatest ornament of a wedding is the beauty of the bride, and Blandine was truly radiant with beauty in her bridal attire. It had, indeed, been no light task for Frau Cosima, amid all her agitation and anxiety for her husband, to give her most beautiful and motherly attention to the cares of hospitality and the preparation of the bride's trousseau, while at the same time appeasing the conflict which had broken out between the Protestant pastor at Bayreuth and the Catholic priest; for it was absolutely necessary for the marriage to be performed by a Catholic priest if it was to be



IN FRONT OF WAHNFRIED, June 1882
Photograph by A. v. Gross

valid in Italy, and this gave rise to difficulties, as also happened on a subsequent occasion, when, in later days, her daughter Eva was married to Houston Chamberlain. On this occasion Frau Cosima wrote a wonderful letter to the Dean, which deserved a fitting place in the archives of the Bavarian Protestant Church as an instructive document pointing the way to higher things. And now, too, she managed in her clear-sighted, courteous, and decided way to remove all obstacles, in Palermo just as much as in Bayreuth. In the end, too, the Archbishop of Bamberg came to her assistance, so that the incident was closed, perhaps to the annoyance of the pastor of Bayreuth. On the 25th took place the civil marriage, followed by the wedding breakfast in the hall at Wahnfried, at which Wagner made his wonderful speech. On the next day followed the religious ceremony and the departure of the young couple, Frau Cosima having previously addressed some noble and beautiful parting words to her daughter on the occasion of her marriage. Then came the farewells at the station, to which the bride's father and grandfather forced their way through the crowd, for neither of them would hear of omitting to take leave of Biagino and Blandine.

The happy couple departed, and the festival ran its wondrous course towards its end. There was one, however, who was absent from the wedding — the bride's father, Hans von Bülow. He was then staying at the Danish seaside resort of Klampenborg, where he had once taken Frau Cosima to restore her health when it was endangered by the anxious time which she had had over the birth of this daughter and while nursing the child through a dangerous illness, for she and she alone had saved it from death. And there he was staying on the very day when this same child, having grown up to radiant health and beauty, was being led to the altar at Bayreuth. But in his stead all Bayreuth had joined in the wedding celebrations — not only their friends, but the whole town also.

The festival was drawing to a close, and the Master, too, was at the end of his strength. The actual events of these days are familiar to us, but here in the diary we may follow Frau Cosima and see how she went up to him in the drawing-room, where he was sitting at the writing-table, and asked him a question, " upon which he said to me that what he desired was death. Late in the evening I sat alone in the now empty room, and brooded and brooded, till my excited brain fell asleep, and I knew more or less how things will be one day."

Then came the last performance, which is entered in letters of gold, not only, we may say, in the history of Bayreuth, but in the history of music too. When he descended to the orchestra for the last act, after greeting his Flower-maidens and singers on the stage, and, taking up the baton, conducted the whole of the third act, the applause was indescribable. Then at last they were left alone, and she writes: "Our return home was silent and solemn. I remarked that we might give thanks, though what we had achieved had been at a heavy cost, and we had sacrificed almost all the comfort of our lives to it. But to Richard, too, this activity is certainly a necessity, and, in spite of all the worry it entails, the only one which is suited to him." Such was the background to the brilliant scenes enacted here. And now began the farewells. Every day saw the departure of some friend — first of all, that of Liszt, who could not be induced to stay any longer, but disappeared for several weeks immediately after the first performance, under the escort of Frau von Meyendorff.

CHAPTER X

THE PASSING OF THE MASTER

IN WAHNFRIED, too, preparations for departure were afoot. One feeling was strongly in evidence and manifested itself most of all at the time of parting. The Gross family came to Wahnfried for the midday meal, apropos of which Frau Cosima writes: " Adolf was really crowned with glory, for all that he did during the festival was absolutely beyond compare. If he longed for friends, he found them indeed." Next there were farewells to be said to the other friends, the Count and Countess Schleinitz and, last of all, the dogs. It is curious how hard this was for the Master in the last case. His faithful bitch Molli had died suddenly during the festival, and amid all that great excitement he had sobbed at the loss of his trusty companion; and now, on taking leave of his Marke, he felt, and said openly, too, that he would never see him again — and, what is more, the faithful dog was there to greet his beloved master when he returned in his coffin, and raised a lamentable howling over him. Frau Cosima herself wrote later to her friend Adolf — for so she now called him in her letters — that she was heavy-hearted and full of forebodings on their departure. They travelled by way of Munich to Verona, where the floods were so unprecedented that it was only barely possible for them to proceed to Venice. Their friends the Schleinitzes, on the other hand, were held up for weeks at Bozen, being unable to get through the inundated area there.

And so they settled down in Venice at the Palazzo Vendramin, which had impressed them during their last stay by its air, which was at once grand and homelike; and, in fact, during the first few days the Master felt wonderfully revived; the great spell of Venice was producing its effect upon him. The feeling that he was now delivered from his tremendous exertions, and the justifiable weariness which took possession of this untiringly creative nature, all combined to give him days which should have been full of supreme delight and charm; but hardly a day passed without a recurrence of those spasms which filled Frau Cosima with the deepest anxiety and increased his irritability to an extraordinary degree. What he needed was quiet, and essentially he could find this only in the closest companionship with Frau Cosima. She anticipated his every wish and sought to gladden him by recalling all their happy hours. She greeted him on her name-day as though it was for him and not for her that it was being celebrated, and paid homage to him in touching verses.

She read the life of Buddha with him and drew a symbolical application from the legend of the god's metamorphosis into a little hare by presenting him with a little gold hare as a talisman. And when in his refractory and wayward temper he behaved towards her in a way which no other woman could have borne, she would say with a smile that what was weakness in other men was his godlike power. This disarmed and appeased him, and as though by way of atonement he smiled gaily and called her "my godlike power (*göttliche Kraft*)." But his soul was haunted, not only by something in the nature of a longing for death, but, above all, by a presentiment of it. When he sat down between the columns of St. Mark's, he would say: "I am Hagen on the Wasgenstein," and remarked that it was so lovely there that they would find him lying there as a corpse. Yet she was still to enjoy a series of most beautiful hours in his company, of which she gives a touching account: "In the afternoon, when the children have gone out," she writes, "I stay with him for a time, and then it is always good. But I cannot check his vitality, which always sets up unrest. Towards me he is always the same" — and since she was very anxious about Siegfried just then, he was amiable and kindly with her.

It is curious how many pictures now rose up before him from the past — among them pictures of lovers. Thus he described how Ferdinand Lassalle had been to see him at Starnberg, introducing himself as Siegfried and referring to his fiancée, Helene Dönniges, as Brünhilde. Many Jews have called themselves Siegfried, and he was perhaps the first to do so. But he had represented his relations with the beautiful Helene as a matter of supreme importance (*Hauptaktion*), in which Wagner, and through him the King, ought actively to intervene. Wagner characterized him as a *poseur* and represented his death in a duel as quite in keeping with this; upon which Frau Cosima gives her own verdict as follows: "In such cases it seems to me that the manner of death is of no significance — indeed, it has very little in any case. It only tells us what a man's life has already told. And Richard agreed with me in this." But they spoke of these things differently on a trip which they took together in a gondola. "Richard and I set out at four o'clock. As we were gliding along in the gondola with a comforting sense of being together, Richard said to me: 'One ought to be able to shut off everything behind one and hear no more about it. In order to endure life one ought to be dead to it.'" Next came October 10, in celebration of which she offered him a little present, which he accepted in touching fashion and which caused him endless delight. She did it without making a speech about it, or even mentioning it. "I cannot account for it to myself," she writes, "but, whether in joy or in suffering, silence has become a necessity for me."

She was, in fact, full of heavy cares, yet happy in the possession of him and of the children — for instance, one day when the Master called for her at the Palazzo Malipiero, where Frau von Schleinitz had joined her mother and where Lulu was staying too, she felt happy at being greeted by the children and escorted home by him, and entered in her diary: "The return home with my dear, good, thoughtful ones is like a benediction to me — a regular Wahnfried wandering abroad and moving about among friends, as we are doing. I found Richard at home resting and embraced him at the very time of day when I first saw him; it was on October 10, and he said: 'That was an acquaintanceship that took firm root.'"

Their stay was made more attractive by the young Gravina couple, who passed nearly the whole of October with them in Venice and kept prolonging their visit, for nobody was so fond of seeing his family and his loved ones around him as Wagner.

This does not mean that he and his family did not enjoy Venice to the full, in spite of the bad weather and incessant rain, which was so heavy that there was some fear of a serious epidemic of fever. It was Heinz Thode, a future son-in-law, who caused the Master, and more especially Frau Cosima, serious agitation by unsuspectingly referring to this, though at the same time he had won their sympathies, and when he told them that he carried the piano-scores of all the Master's works about with him and had heard *The Valkyrie* thirty-five times in Vienna, while at the same time explaining that he meant to be a university lecturer (*Privatdozent*), the Master threw up his hands and said: " So he wants to be a professor too," adding that he would be the right husband for Daniela — which is indeed what fate afterwards brought about. This was one of the charming scenes acted in the Palazzo Vendramin — a cheerful scene with a serious background — for it was a hospitable house. To begin with, Levi arrived and met with a friendly reception, and many others found their way there. Heinrich von Stein was now their guest; a new tutor was teaching Siegfried and acting as his guide through the city; but at this time every excitement brought on the Master's spasms, and every attack was a cause of violent emotion and the gravest anxiety to Frau Cosima. As it continued to stream with rain, he himself expressed the opinion that they ought to go to warmer parts, in order that he might live to see his son a man. But he could not tear himself away from Venice, which never ceased to attract him, and as he showed the children the comet which hung menacingly in the sky, he recalled the fact that in 1858, too, a comet had blazed threateningly over Venice.

Now came the sad news of Gobineau's death, which she wanted to keep a secret from her husband, " but he found me reading about it, and I could not keep it from him that our friend, our dearest one, was dead! . . . This determined our mood for the day, we could not have shared this news with others. I went out with Seigfried, and after one o'clock we happened across each other. ‘ One has scarcely met a man like that,’ said Richard, ‘ when he vanishes like water slipping between one’s fingers.’ He said this after a pause, and we went over the features which had marked Gobineau’s death, his unrest, his desire to rush away from everything, and, last of all, his death in absolute solitude. And again and again during the day we returned to this man with whom no other could compare, until in the evening Richard played the first bars of the funeral music for Siegfried.” That night he dreamed of Gobineau, and at breakfast next morning he spoke to her of their dead friend and commissioned her to write something about him, upon which she says: “ I started the remarks which Richard wanted me to write about Gobineau for the *Blätter*.” Such was the origin of that wonderful obituary notice, the first and best appreciation of the man who had written the great work on [the Germanic] races. The Master himself said that none but a woman, and this woman in particular, could have written it. It is significant that during these days they discussed the pictures and representations of Christ, and the Master said: “ It is impossible to paint Christ, but one can reproduce him in music.” “ I said to him that I considered his discretion in having given up the figure of Christ and substituted that of Parsifal all the more lofty and artistic in its significance; to which he replied: ‘ Christ rendered by a tenor — pah! ’ From this we went on to talk of painting, and how it was capable of representing the Mother of God; but Richard denied that the Virgin as represented in pictures of the Assumption was the Mother of God; she was Isolde glorified by love (*in der Liebesverklärung*), he said, whereas in that marvellously inspired work the Sistine Madonna one had the expression of beauty made perfect, of complete inaccessibility, of an idea so intangibly remote as to take one’s breath away. And that glance — so sublime, yet withal so lovable and so lovely! And so to rest, soothed and rapt away from the world of reality by works of art.”

For the rest, however, the whole time they spent in Venice was filled for her with the most grievous anxieties, and with deep anguish as well. It was as though the foreboding of death cast a twilight shadow over the city of the lagoons. “ It seems to me,” she had written to Herr von Gross, " as though it was a sense of foreboding that made it so particularly hard for me to leave Bayreuth, but I simply will not give way to such melancholy reflections." And as we try to picture this time, it must not be forgotten that she suffered severely from the Master's excitability, which could be traced to his really pathetic jealousy of his father-in-law. He could not forgive him his " *Wittgenstand*," as he called his " rank " in the Princess's household; and his rancour against that lady was for ever breaking out and found fresh nurture in the stories told by Daniela's friend Ada Pinelli, who had come on a visit to the Princess Hatzfeldt and had wonderful tales to tell of that strange anchoress, who at this period can really only be treated in the spirit in which Viktor von Scheffel depicted the pious nun Wiborad in his *Ekkehard*. Hence it is noteworthy, and at the same time significant of his nervous condition, that the Master did not deal with the influence of this " woman from Rome " with a due sense of humour; but she had interfered far too seriously with his life for him to do so, and she cannot be exempted from blame for having made a complete and intimate reunion between these two great men and musicians impossible, even at the close of Richard Wagner's great career. Both now and later Liszt suffered from her letters, but it was, of course, impossible at that time for Frau Cosima to tell him what she afterwards ventured to say at Wahnfried when she saw him in despair over a letter of the Princess's. He had not yet found sufficient energy or peace to refrain from opening her letters, as he did later; for after his death a considerable heap of these harassing missives was found unopened.

The incidents that occurred every day were of great moment, and they have rightly been placed on record. Glasenapp is a good source for this precise part of Richard Wagner's life, for he made use of this noble woman's diaries. Through her entries during these days runs a remarkable and even strange foreboding of death, that nameless dread which she could not explain to herself and which deprived even her of the power to take a calm view of the most insignificant disputes. On the other hand, the Master always remained a great man in the fullest sense of the word, and if we consider the origin of the dejection which filled his life, too, we see that it was due not so much to want of artistic activity — for of that there was no lack up to his last breath — as to a great task. He discussed *The Victors*, it is true, but said that he was incapable of transferring himself to that Indian *milieu*. That he attempted to do so is shown by his eager preoccupation with Buddha, in which, according to his old custom, he invited his wife to share. But he felt that here it was necessary to identify himself with a new world. The one which he had created had been drawn from the primal origins of the Germanic world and from a Germanization of the old French legends of Tristan and Parsifal. But even he could not have succeeded in Germanizing the world of Indian legend and, above all, the figure of Buddha; for in the latter he was confronted by the same obstacle as had already presented itself in his wonderful conversation about Christ: he could not place Christ side by side with Buddha, even in the music-drama. Alike in his love and in the immeasurably deep affinity which he felt for his dramatic figures, his emotions were fervent and unique, and so in the end the idea of *The Victors* was lost in the tropical forests of India, into which, as he repeatedly remarked, he was unable to find his way.

But it would be a mistake not to consider these days from the point of view of the anxiety that was felt for the Master's health. She wrote to her most trusty friend, Adolf von Gross: " Unhappily I am by no means satisfied with his condition. There is no diminution of the spasmodic attacks, and it is no comfort to me that people think he is looking well." The arrival of this friend was the greatest consolation to her — at this moment, indeed, almost more so than that of Frau von Schleinitz, who, once the floods had subsided, had at last been able to make her way from Bozen and join her mother in Venice. But here Mimi was completely absorbed in the household of the Princess Hatzfeldt, and this alone produced a certain antagonism between her and the Master, for at that time everything to do with society was more than ever hateful to him, chiefly because it deprived him of the quiet, happy enjoyment of a life shared with his wife. What disturbed him in Liszt was the latter's longing for society, and once he remarked that this was all part of the profession of a virtuoso, which had shown itself in a positively tragic fashion in the case of Liszt; though at the same time he was just enough to recognize that Liszt had shown his nobility by escaping from this atmosphere. But Frau Cosima must live for him, and for him alone, and this, too, was due to a sort of presentiment that these were to be the last hours they would spend together. Such egoism is pathetic and almost childlike, and we can feel this in her own descriptions: " He also complained that we could not be alone together: ' Sublime Spirit," he would say, ' Thou gavest me all. Thou gavest me Cosima — yet we cannot be all by ourselves.' He said that he never had to go and visit anybody, while I still led a social life. He maintained that it was my father who had infected me with this. I explained to him that if I made a call now and then, it was for the children's sake." Of course, he always recovered from these moods, and such remarks were followed by outbursts of really touching penitence. In fact, everything about him was instinct with vitality, and since his gigantic intellect was not fully occupied, the whole of existence did not suffice to satisfy him. What else could have led him at this very time to write his wonderful introduction to the dramatic dialogues of his young friend Heinrich von Stein and, by way of a conclusion to his essays, to arrange his ideas for a treatise on *The Male and the Female Principle* (*Vom Männlichen und Weiblichen*), which it was unfortunately not granted to him to complete. His restless mind was for ever at work. He talked of symphonies, and was often to be seen at the piano in the twilight, when music of the most wondrous kind was heard. His imagination knew no rest, nor did his powers, but they were not focused upon a great object, as they had been throughout his life; and perhaps this is the tragedy of this final period, a tragedy heightened by his bodily suffering. Perhaps, too, the doctors were to blame for constantly reassuring him and telling him that he was thoroughly healthy and that his spasms were merely due to derangements that were not in the least dangerous.

During the whole of this period, however, his chief antagonism was for Frau Cosima's father. It must not be forgotten that Liszt was many years older than the Master and had grown accustomed, in the society of the Princess, to certain soothing occupations which provide what may be called a social narcotic, so that he attached more importance to the game of whist than did the Master, who often, as was obvious, only took his place at the card-table in a spirit of fun and would start up from it in a temper just because the game was taken too seriously. Amid all this, Frau Cosima was both mediator and victim, and there is no denying that this very reason led at times to Richard's violent outbursts of excitability. She would withdraw in tears, only to appear again cheerful and composed, since she knew that nothing but calm on her part would have any effect upon his violence. On these occasions nothing was more terrible to him than the fact that he had wounded her; for in nothing was he so youthful as in this jealousy, which we might call delicious, had it not been that it embittered the last weeks of Liszt's stay in Venice for him too, though it was the Master himself who suggested to Liszt that he should remain with him permanently. This, however, would hardly have been possible for Liszt, whose correspondence with the Princess was particularly active at this time and was confined within the narrow limits of social intelligence. Possibly, too, he did not — indeed, could not — feel what was going on in the Master's mind. Nor, on the other hand, could the Master follow his wife's advice and frankly tell Liszt his opinion of his latest compositions. She suffered from his terrible and devastating judgment of them. She had no suspicion that in this matter it was not jealousy on account of the music, but on her account, that may to a certain extent have influenced the Genius. In short, these are personal relations and affairs of which it may perhaps be possible to treat some day in a psychological novel, not about the Master, but about Franz Liszt; for Pourtalès is right in saying that he is quite a fit subject for such treatment. The figure of Richard Wagner, on the other hand, is too creative and sublime to be approached by anybody, though endowed with literary powers of the highest order.

But this was a period of infinite suffering, which she sought to disguise beneath an imperturbable calm and outward serenity. Of course, when he broke out against her father with the utmost violence, her filial heart writhed in anguish, and still more so when he gave her the worst possible reports of Hans von Bülow's condition, which, she thanked God, were without confirmation. This news, indeed, all but crushed her, but here again she displayed the greatest force of character, and in these hours of the deepest anxiety, for Hans no less than for her husband, she gave proof of the noblest womanly qualities. Her sufferings during these days were undoubtedly beyond expression, and she had a terrible struggle with herself and with fate; but she always remained the same strong and noble woman.

Thus the life which she led was, as it were, a mere simulacrum. When Eva suddenly fell ill and the doctor — a German — was anxious, because he did not recognize the germ of the disease, she hurried to the sick-bed and let the stream of society pass her by. Here was quiet, here was peace, and her anxiety for the child enabled her to collect herself, in order that she might rise to meet other and heavier cares, such as were now heaped upon her shoulders, for everything passed through her hands — the negotiations with the officials of the Royal Household with a view to a separate performance at Munich, which were by no means of an agreeable nature; the dispute, which was now coming to a head, with Voltz and Batz,[1] which was settled in a truly noble way by Adolf von Gross, though not till after the Master's death; or the conflict with the excellent Signora Lucca of Milan, his Italian publisher. She had, above all, to advocate reducing the number of performances in 1883 from twenty-five to twelve, and this she did. Next Adolf von Gross himself came to Venice with his wife, bringing comfort and help to this noble woman, and, in spite of the agitating affairs which he had to discuss with the Master, he produced a highly soothing effect upon him too. It is one of the splendid services rendered by this exceptional man to have kept care and excitement away from the Master in this way during these last months — we may even say weeks — of his life. It was infinitely comforting to Frau Cosima in particular to have this trusty friend and his touchingly devoted wife with her, if only for four days. They had come from Triebschen, which their strong sympathy with Wahnfried had led them to visit, and this sentiment was strongly displayed in Venice too. There was, indeed, no lack of social relations, nor, indeed, could there have been. Even the Master was delighted with a performance of Goethe's *Geschwister* (*Brothers and Sisters*) in the *salon* of the Princess Hatzfeldt, who was a *bel esprit,* but combined such qualities very thoroughly with the spirit of "*Frau Welt* (Lady World)," with which she had, indeed, the closest connexions. In this piece Daniela played the part of Marianne to the great satisfaction of the audience, while even the Master praised her. During these days, indeed, Frau Cosima's eldest daughter helped and encouraged them both at home and in their relations with the outside world in the most beautiful and delicate way. Happy and cheering news arrived from the Countess Gravina, and Frau Cosima felt that down in Sicily her daughter's distinguished and refined nature had enabled her to become entirely identified with people who were equally distinguished.

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[1] Wagner's agents. — Tr.

But the imperious impulse towards artistic work was restlessly alive in the mind of the Master, and so he arranged for a performance of his Symphony on December 25. He had written to Paris asking Engelbert Humperdinck to come at once and conduct the Symphony. This young friend, who, since the days at the Villa d'Angri, had become whole-heartedly attached to the Master, and in the days to come was to prove a faithful satellite of Wahnfried, at once obeyed the summons; though the Master himself undertook to conduct the Symphony, which was to be performed in the Fenice Theatre. It was he who directed the rehearsals, and himself invited his wife to attend the general rehearsal, though she smiled at the imperfect secrecy that had been observed about this surprise. She enjoyed the general rehearsal far more than the performance; but he wanted to give her a treat and, if possible, dispel the gloomy mood into which her unutterable forebodings had plunged her, and, thanks to this work, he succeeded in doing so, especially as she saw that some artistic occupation made him calmer and, above all, restored his old cheerfulness. The general rehearsal, which she attended in the cold theatre, did not take place without some worry for her. "Richard had one of his spasms," she writes in her diary, "but he conducted the first movement, and then, after rather a long interval, the rest. I sat quietly there, a long way away from him, and was touched to think that he was performing this work for me, just as he had done for his mother fifty years ago. But I was delighted with this frank, sincere work and said to Richard: 'That was written by one who knew no fear.' We went home by moonlight with Loldi, Richard and I refraining from speaking. He spent the evening by himself, and unfortunately he had a very disturbed night." That was on the 23rd. Then came the last Christmas, with its magnificent array of presents; for he had done all he could to give pleasure to everybody. It is true that the dresses which he had ordered for her only arrived by instalments, but she knew what a delight he took in her, so she wore them to please him. Next came the performance itself, which was really to celebrate her birthday, and in which her father also took part with deep emotion. He well knew the significance of this symphony, which the Master himself has described [1] as a sort of preparation on his part for the *Eroica*. He had shown no signs of hesitation or faltering in it, and a similar impression was made by the performance, which aroused general enthusiasm. But after he had laid down the conductor's baton, the Master went up to Liszt and whispered in his ear: " Do you love your daughter? " Liszt was startled, until the Master added: " Then sit down to the piano and play." " My father promptly did so, to the tumultuous delight of everybody." She returned home and saw everything in a wonderfully glorified light; and while they were at table, the Master got up, went to the piano, and played " He who such a woman wins (*Wer ein solches Weib errungen*)."

From this time onward he was livelier and in better spirits. The *Bayreuther Blätter* arrived almost in time for New Year's Eve, with Frau Cosima's article on Gobineau, and he was once more full of her praises. There is something touching, too, in the fact that this time it was he who made the fair copy of her work, whereas on other occasions this task had fallen to her. This was an act at once of deep devotion and of homage to her wonderful intellect, to which during the following weeks he confided practically everything that was of importance for the future. He said firmly and decidedly that he must produce *Tannhäuser* at Bayreuth, and not that alone, but all his works. Next he declared that, after all, it would be better to begin with *Tristan and Isolde* and let the other works follow. It was a sort of artistic testament of which he informally appointed his wife executrix, though not in so many words. She was glad when he set to work, and remarked: "That sweeps away all his ill humour." But her solicitude for his health remained, and, what is more, the pain caused by his antagonism for Liszt, which was only too obvious, even in his conversations with her. It was impossible to allay his excitability, and he himself sought to justify it in words, which gave her a certain satisfaction. "Nature needed a long time," he said, "before producing the passions; it is nature that can lead one to the sublimest heights. Music is its transfiguration and, alone among the arts, is closely dependent upon it." And she was perfectly conscious that once music, with its glorious associations of harmony, fell silent, discord would take its place. But how she acted and what she felt during these early days of the year 1883 are best expressed in the following letter to Mimi: "Your mother," she writes, "will probably have written to you that my eyes are once more becoming unfit for service. For some days past I have dictated all my letters. But I have kept you to myself as a recompense and would gladly overstrain myself for this purpose if necessary. Your letter sounded very serious, my dear, dearest Mimi, and I, too, seem to myself so very serious that I scarcely feel good for anything that is not connected with my most intimate feelings. Well, today everyone is at your dear mother's, and the day before yesterday, too, my husband and I sat alone while the most charming music was being played at the friendly Palazzo Malipiero, and we were lost in a world far, far away from the present, so far that I found it quite an effort to collect my wits afterwards and pay attention to the restless life around me. Marie [1] is with us now; I found her changed, the softness has gone from her shape and movements, and her voice has acquired a slight sharpness, but her charm remains. Yesterday again I was looking forward to her future with great confidence, and it was a real triumph that my tender affection for her should have prevailed upon my husband to give her a hearing, and interest himself in her fate. Today I am in a more depressed mood, and my husband's interest is already exhausted. I have misgivings about her physical strength, and, besides, I seem to have noticed that her dependent nature has in no wise changed, which leads me to fear further sufferings for her, of the same kind as she has undergone and inflicted. But her character has developed, I believe that external advantages have little influence upon her, and as I came to recognize this, Count W.'s noble words, which you once quoted to me, came into my mind: 'I respect every woman who has the courage to be divorced.' Did your reflections upon marriage occur to you apropos of this affair? As a matter of fact, it suggested my own. I maintain that unless husband and wife live in and for each other, even at the price of great sacrifices, marriage is a monstrosity — a hell, in fact — nay, one of the most horrible and sordid institutions ever devised; though, on the other hand, it may be the sublimest thing to which human nature can rise amid the instability of all things. It is so hard to imagine either a man or a woman both capable and worthy of absolute absorption, and their union for the purpose of bearing the ordinary burdens of life calls for such a display of both seriousness and cheerfulness, passion and wisdom, that it seems to me a terrible thing to credit every couple with these. In this respect, too, we certainly cannot be grateful enough to Luther for the possibility of putting an end to a state which is the most unworthy thing imaginable — for both parties, too — unless it is sublime in spite of all its sufferings. So far as our most lovable friend is concerned, my mood is such today that I think she would have done just as well in the long run to have endured life with D.! May God forgive me if I am unjust in thinking so. My views were different yesterday. Today I cannot help viewing her conduct almost as a *coup de tête*. It is possible that next time I meet her I shall have changed my mind, and I should be very glad of it. I think I am too weary to be able to give really intelligent advice to any creature whom I cannot reckon absolutely among those who belong to me, and the role of spectator troubles me. Last month I went through the most painful days and can only recover myself thanks to the beseeching looks and tones of those who belong to me — everything else makes me afraid.

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[1] See *Mein Leben*, English translation, pp. 70–1.—Tr.

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[1] The Countess Dönhoff. — Tr.

Scarcely a day passes but the old pain awakes anew — accompanied, as by a younger brother, by a new one. Then I simply have to collect myself, and everything that hinders this process seems to me distressing. ' A beat of pinions and behind us æons (*Ein Flügelschlag und hinter uns Äonen*) ' — how well I know this! And, full of thankfulness, I often feel as though I were carrying all who belong to me on my pinions and, buoyed up by inspiration, were bearing them hence through the invisible worlds! But the image of the wounded swan in *Parsifal* is present to me, too, and the way in which it vainly struggles upwards for flight until in the end it sinks exhausted! When will this last sinking be, when will night fall upon our house? I have not yet thanked you for your beautiful birthday wishes, my beloved Mimi. Alas, one stands in need of such alms, and when you offer me them, my only Mimi, I press you to my heart and bless you as though you were my child! Your mother will have told you of our little birthday party (*Gratulation*),[1] which has left me with a sense of distress, because even on such an occasion D. was unable to rid herself of the tendency which her nature has acquired. It is of course she herself who suffers most from this, and perhaps, if I had had any idea that she would not share in our feelings, I should have given up the whole thing and so spared your mother and her some troubled moments. I always feel that in the case of D., too, a great and efficacious influence could untie or cut all the knots, and at times I even feel — and you will not think this presumptuous of me — as though I were capable of exerting such an influence upon her, and it saddens me to think that this cannot happen, and that in her the burden of nature has developed into an utter enslavement of the heart. The doctrine of the suffering of Buddha! . . . I am delighted that you are taken with the book; if you will not think me too tedious, I will tell you the upshot of my meditations upon it — which is a comparison between Christianity and Buddhism. In the former I see God become man, taking all sufferings and sins upon Himself and knowing nothing save consolation through His love. In Buddhism I see man aspiring to become God, turning away from suffering, and expecting to arrive at all he seeks by realizing the necessity for this detachment. Furthermore, it is as a result of this enormous distinction that Christianity is incomparably more fruitful of results, in art as well. Christ calls those who mourn blessed and includes them in his Beatitudes; he accepts Magdalen's repentance and summons us, not to a cloistered or professing life (*erkennendes Leben*), but only to a breach with the world, to love. For this reason his teaching was bound to fall a prey to the most disgraceful misrepresentations and vile abuses. For, like the Saviour upon the cross, it has been delivered into the hands of men. But, though desecrated, it has been eternally creative, and one may safely assert that there is not a single great trait in human nature — courage, self-sacrifice, love, capacity for renunciation, pride, humility, enthusiasm, exalted passion, joy in life (here I am thinking of Goethe), weariness of life, wisdom, and simplicity — that has not rendered either service or homage to Christianity. The contribution made by Buddhism to religious thought is the idea of perception accompanied by submission, of wisdom and renunciation; Christianity stands for love and action, ability, art. — And now I really do beg earnestly for forgiveness and take a bold leap to the Renaissance procession! . . . Since you were to arrange it, it seemed to me that D. could not do otherwise than be present, and if you give it up, I will keep D., for I feel as though you did not need her now, and I am glad to flatter myself that she is a welcome guest at your dear mother's! She is at your disposal whenever she fits in best with all your obligations. I say obligations, and I have heavy ones in mind! I can see quite well from your letter that you are in some anxiety, and if I let myself go somewhat unduly in my first pages, this was because I knew that you were in the same state of mind as I am, though for very different reasons. Yet I like to picture you as always happy — nay, something would be wanting in my conception of the affairs of life if I were no longer to see you radiant with happiness; so may God preserve it both for your sake and for mine, and cause this gift of happiness to emerge triumphant from all trials. Who is this God upon whom I call, of whom I said earlier that He became man? Ah, who can tell? And yet in every sacrifice I find Him strongly present, in every weakness painfully absent, and in my boundless impotence I confide to Him all my lamentations, all my struggles, all my hopes, mingled with despairing apprehension, all the lives that I should like to illumine and all that I bear faithfully in my heart — and therefore you as well, my dearest Mimi."

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[1] It was the Princess Hatzfeldt's birthday. — Tr.

This letter is characteristic of her feeling and attitude towards life, and more particularly of the way in which, amid all her troubles, she had become absorbed in the order of ideas which occupied the Master and caused him, as it were, to follow a course intermediate between Christianity and Buddhism, just as he had once wandered through the lanes of Sorrento, which were hemmed in on either side by gigantic walls overhung by bushes and trees. But she was able to take a pleasure in him too, and what she writes apropos of the time which they spent with the "little Countess" has a fresh and hopeful note: "Richard's face was filled with a wonderful radiance during these days, and when his eyes were turned on me, it caused me bliss and pain at one and the same time. I am indescribably conscious of this today." But the spasms continued, and, side by side with the images, cheerful or serious, which they drew from literature, and with their joy at Siegfried's recovery and first attempts at poetry, every day brought with it a reminder of death. They spoke of the need of priestly consolation which some experience at the moment of death, and she pointed to the fact that even Marie Mouchanoff, who had meant to have such a noble end, had in the end admitted the priest; "to which Richard added with a smile: 'Out of fear of hell.' 'Of such things are we capable,' I replied. But then he played most wonderfully: such were the flowers that blossom for him as the recompense of a quiet mind." In all this we see the necessity which he felt for clinging to every beautiful moment. At one moment he would speak of death as dressed, so to speak, in the costume of Harlequin; at another he would give a ready answer, full of characteristic profundity and merriment, to her question why the sun (*die Sonne*) was feminine. "It is a prodigious tribute to the feminine sex," he said. "They regarded the moon [which is masculine in German] as a vagabond hiding in the bushes

(*Buschklepper*) and roaming round after them by night." And how affecting it is to read how, on one of the last days of January, he recited a poem which he had learnt by heart at school:

> Phylax, who so many a night
> O'er the house held faithful guard.

Phylax ended by dying, at which he smiled to himself and said that at that time he had been too good to this Phylax.

He was oppressed with melancholy thoughts and wondered whether they would ever see Venice again. "There is much that he misses here," she writes, "but he dreads being penned up in the north." Next came a book of Nietzsche's, *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (*Joyful Wisdom*), which caused one of the Master's last bad fits of agitation. He displayed a deep antipathy for it and pronounced the severest verdict upon it: "Everything in it that is worth anything," he said, "is borrowed from Schopenhauer," adding that everything about the man was antipathetic (*widerwärtig*) to him.

The carnival came round, which in Venice sets the whole population agog. He could not deny himself the pleasure of taking the children to look on at the merry doings from a café, and afterwards, on Shrove Tuesday evening, he himself took them into the thick of the turmoil. The old Austrian porter at the Palazzo Vendramin, who regarded him as his master, stayed up till he returned at night and, as the gondola was moored at the steps, said to him: "*Il Carnivale è andato* (No more carnival now)." Then came Ash Wednesday, and he handed Frau Cosima the dedication to *Parsifal.* He laid his hand on the manuscript of the biography and said that it gave him the same feeling as All Souls' Day. Then he had a dream in which he saw his mother in all the grace of youth, a brilliant vision, and on waking said to his wife, with the utmost tenderness, that he hated himself for tormenting her so. He also spoke touchingly of her father, referring once more to his virtuosity, but saying that, after all, he was a great man. And after all these discussions she asked him with touching devotion whether he was fond of her, and he answered:

"Isolde is the world to me,
What would the world without her be?"

Then came February 12, when he said laughingly: "Your father is being ruined by associating with fine gentlemen (*geht vor lauter Kavalieren zugrunde*)." After they had retired to rest, she heard him speaking and went into his room, when he said that he had been talking about her, and "embraced me long and tenderly." "Every five thousand years it is a success," he said. "I spoke of the Indian nature, and of how the soul yearns for its other soul." Then he went to the piano and played the scene from *The Rhinegold: "Falsch und feig ist, was oben sich freut* (False and base are those who revel above)"[1] and added: "To think that I knew it so clearly at that time!" And as he lay in bed, he said again: "I am fond of them, of the inferior beings of the abyss, of those who are full of longing."

These are the last words recorded by Frau Cosima in her diary, on the morning of February 13 — the day of his death! Then she was summoned to him, and as she clasped the dying man in her arms and watched beside his dead body for fully twenty-five hours, it seemed as though her heart would break. Then, like Brünhilde when she bade the men-at-arms heap up a "pyre of mightiest logs (*starke Scheite*),"[2] she summoned her daughters Daniela and Isolde and, in spite of their remonstrances, insisted upon their cutting off her hair of mingled silver and gold. She laid it on the breast of the dead man as he lay in his coffin. Such things speak to the heart. What more can we say about them?

I will therefore merely quote the simple account given by the trusty Adolf Gross, who, as Wagner's friend and trustee, at once hastened to the side of the inconsolable widow. I still see him and his wife kneeling beside this noble woman, when all that she said to him was that he must be the children's friend and guardian. All the rest is contained in Adolf Gross's report, which is as simple and modest as the man himself.

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[1] *The Rhinegold*, Scene IV, end. — Tr.

[2] *Twilight of the Gods*, III, iii. — Tr.

" At eight o'clock on February 13 arrived the telegram: 'The Master has passed away, come at once.'

" At this time the Berlin-Munich express passed Neuenmarkt station at about eleven o'clock, so that it was possible to catch it by driving there. We made our preparations for the journey and drove in our own carriage to Neuenmarkt, where we were just in time to get into the express. At Munich Herr von Bürkel, the King's secretary, was waiting to consult with us. Towards eleven o'clock the express started for Italy, and at about two o'clock in the morning we reached Venice, where we were met by M. Joukowski and Lang, the manservant, and conducted to the house of mourning, the Palazzo Vendramin.

" There we found Daniela, who at once led us into a little room where her mother was lying on a bed, dressed and with her eyes closed. We ventured upon a few words of sympathetic greeting, to which all that the suffering widow replied was: 'I entrust the children to you.' We received no reply to our remarks and entreaties. We remained for a while on our knees beside the bed and then withdrew, to rest for a short time and then make preparations for the transport of the body and the return home.

" Innumerable telegrams arrived from all quarters, besides many friends, among them Hermann Levi and Hans Richter. No one could see or speak to the noble sufferer, who was lost to the world and could not leave her bed.

" At noon on the third day I was able to inform the noble woman that everything was ready for the journey home. She received the news in silence, and shortly afterwards I was able to conduct her and her children to the gondola which was to take them to the station. A saloon carriage had been attached to the train, with a small compartment arranged for the reception of the noble woman. Several deputations representing Venice and the State had appeared to express their condolences. It fell to my share to thank them all, and the train, in one of whose carriages were contained the Master's mortal remains, started amid silence. At all the larger stations deputations appeared, bearing floral tributes, and thanks were rendered — perforce — for musical tributes.

"Towards evening the noble woman asked to see my wife, who remained with her for some time and received a few instructions. Next morning she desired me to come to her and asked me various questions. We and the children then took it in turns to stay with her. She could not be persuaded to take any nourishment and turned a deaf ear to all other entreaties.

"At Kufstein the representatives of the King were waiting for the train with wreaths, but they, too, could not be received by the suffering widow.

"At Munich, where a ceremony had been arranged, I had the saloon carriage shunted into a siding outside the station, where I remained with the servants during the wait of several hours, while the children were able to attend the ceremony in the station with my wife.

"The journey to Bayreuth continued in the same manner, the noble woman did not leave her bed and would not suffer herself to be influenced even by the most well-meaning suggestions.

"The arrival here took place about midnight. The station was full to overflowing, no sort of welcome could take place. The suffering widow, quite oblivious of all that was going on about her, left the carriage and was conducted by me to the vehicle which bore her and the children to Wahnfried. The Master's mortal remains were left at the station under the guardianship of members of the gymnastic club and fire-brigade."

Between the lines of this account glow an infinite depth of feeling and a full understanding both for the dead and for the living. "My poor dear wife (*Armeseelenweib*)," the Master had once said as she placed the flowers upon his work-table for the day; and such, indeed, she was now in the deepest and most poignant sense of the word. But she was more than this. She had led him, as Beatrice had led Dante, through all dangers to paradise. But at this very moment a great new departure began; she had yet another mission to fulfil. And in the midst of paradise she veiled her face and turned her steps backwards, past the rocks and the serpent, into purgatory. Through the inferno, too, where she was suffered to pass in peace, until she reached the gate through which for others there was no return. But she returned to the life of the world, a poor unhappy wife, full of deepest lamentation, an Isolde, who longed for death, yet was deeply conscious of that imperious mission with which the Master had silently and smilingly charged her during those last solemn hours, and which had sunk deep into her soul. She was broken and weary unto death, so that even Hans von Bülow cried to her: "*Sœur, il faut vivre* (Sister, one must live)!" But then she roused herself from her woe and inner misery to new activity and the consummation of the work. She who had saved the Master and become his tutelary genius became — the Lady of Bayreuth.

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